MOVEMENT – 1990-2010 – & *NDP Left Caucus Newsletter 1990-1994*

Correspondence, Journals & Documents – Socialist League / Forward Group

**Archival Items – 'On File' –copies available at National Archives, Ottawa*

1990

1990-06Sum-lcn-v3 Greening the NDP through workers' control

1990-08Aug8a F G declares solidarity with F.I. as LC (Canada) & SWP-US break

1990-08Aug28 FG letter donation to IEC, Fourth International, France

1991

*1991-Feb.28 Proposals for Amendments to Charter of Rights & Freedoms by Lois Bedard,Joyce Rosenthal , etc.-- Equality Rights (17 p-file) (LCN Vol.4 No. 1 not available or number skipped)

1991-04Spr-lcn-v4 **LCN-**Challenge before NDP convention–For a mass labor paper

1991-06Jun-lcn-v4 **LCN-**Left Caucus program at Ontario NDP convention

1991-07July29 Petition: Leonard Peltier: (U.S.) Native political prisoner

1991-08Aug4 Letter to Harry P, (Winnipeg) re Forward Group

1991-08Aug16 FG presentation to 'Festival of the Left' – what reality?

1991-10Oct00a Emergency Resolution on failure of Ontario NDP government

1991-11Nov5 Forward Group invitation to meeting of Trotskyist groups

1991-10Oct-99-1 The NDP – A balance sheet *(unsigned – Forward Group)*

*1991 "'International Trotskyism 1929-1985" by R.J. Alexander, Duke U. Press, pp.144-159 -- ISBN 0-8223-0975 HX313.8 (on file)

1992

1992-04Apr12	FG all-day Class: «What Future for Capitalism?»
1992-06June27	Who governs Ontario? *(NDP?)* Rally against Big Business
1992-06Sum-lcn-v5	**LCN-**NDP at Crossroads—Left must unite—Casino socialism?
1992-10Oct00a	Vote No in Mulroney Referendum! Gender equality
1992-10Oct00b	Defend federal social programs; Their Canada or ours?
1992-98	Text: "Then and Now"
1992-98a	«Then and Now»: The 1960s; Uneven radicalization *(Bulletin)*
1992-99-0a	*The Bulletin* circular letter introducing the first issue
1992-99-0b	*The Bulletin,* Vol. 1 No. 1 «Fitting the Pieces together»
1992-99-1	Contents (proposed twice annual but only issue –ed.)
1992-99-19	Back cover: Help make it happen! (Contribution coupon)

1993-1994

1993-01Wtr-lcn-v6	**LCN-** MPP Drainville speaks out on casino gambling
1993-02Feb8	Memo – FG protest against exclusionary policy of Weisleder
1993-10Aut-lcn-v6	**LCN-**SPECIAL EDITION – What happened to the NDP?
1993-12Dec10	Notice: Lois Bédard's 70 Birthday party
1993-12Wtr-lcn-v6	**LCN-**Labour's political future–Who we are (Left Caucus News)
1993-99	Excerpt "Giving away a Miracle" Ehring & Roberts
1994-00-lcn-v7n1	LCN-Path to labour unity (Special 1974 convention edition)
1994-00-lcn-v7n2	(continuation) 'We know the party is in crisis – it's not over'
1994-07July00a	Tribute to Vic Hugh (veteran rubberworker) union militant

*1994-Dec6	J.D. 'Notes on Forward Group discussion' on voting NDP (file)
*1994-98a-b-c	LC "leaflet": meet the threat to Canada from US business
	(End 1994 – end of NDP Left Caucus Newsletter file)

1995-1999

1995-04Apr11a	J.D. Notes on history of movement
1995-09Sept23	Social presented by NDP Women's Committee
1996-05May3a	Letter from Kopyto to Paine; objection to its tone
1996-07July26	Tribute to Art Gray, Trotskyist, engineer, farmer, historian
1998-01Jan10	Review of “A communist life: Jack Scott” by B. Palmer
1999-01Jan	60 Years of the 4th International (from IV-VanGelderen)
*1999-February	Sixty years of struggle (The 4th International) Livio Maitan (file)
*1999-September	FG report on website record of LSA debate on nationalism (file)
1999-FI-SWP	Pt. 1 - In Defence of the LSA Pt. 1 – against the F.I. & SWP
1999-FI-SWP	Pt. 2 – Counter-documents of the FI sections
1999-02Feb21	FG invite to home film showing “Matewan”

2000-2006

2000-09Sept-1	“The relevance of Marxism Today” by H. Kopyto
*2000-11Nov14	J.D. Memo evaluation “Rebuilding the Left” conference (file)
*2001-January	"Angie Inside" Canadian Lawyer --Codina jailed in NY (file)
2001-05May10	Le Devoir cartoon: The Queen's 'apology' to les Acadiens
*2001-May22	J.D. Report International Socialists Conference, Toronto (file)

2001-05May23a	Report on Alternate Summit, Quebec City (Letter to Colleen)
*2002-January	Discussion: E. Tate 'NDP & the Canadian Left' (14pp-file)
2002-03Mar3	*Toronto Star* columnist Thomas Walkom: Ross Dowson Obit.
2002-06June8	Memorial Meeting note for Ross Dowson, Ryerson campus
*2002-10-20	FG Bulletin: Canadian Nationalism : CUSP Conference
*2002-12Dec14	Text of James Laxer in CD:“Wake Up Time”
*2003-Winter	'Interview with Karl Marx' (Chicago Tribune, Jan8,1879) (file)
*2003-January 7	Survey of NDP leadership candidates (Newpol-28pp-file)
2003-01Jan26	Bev Meslo's campaign for NDP leader at convention
2003-02Feb2-1	Forward Group NDP leadership convention discussion
2003-02Feb2-2	Forward Group report on Dowson archives & website
2003-03Mar21	NDP demands clarity on Canada's role and Bush's war
2003-05May4	Rally & March End the Occupation from Iraq to Palestine
*2003-April 4	Mel Hurtig speech on Canada-US relations
*2003-10Oct20	Report on left nationalist conference--York U
*2005Fall	*Labor/Le Travail* #56: Maurice Spector, James P. Cannon, and the origins of Canadian Trotskyism, by Bryan Palmer (57pp-file)
2005-12Dec13-1	Charles Gagnon, FLQ intellectual leader (Obit-Globe & Mail)
2005-12Dec13-2	Gagnon: released from prison, February 1970
2006-07July	Say No to faith-based arbitration (Sharia)**,”** by H. Kopyto
2006-10Oct6a	Email J.D.: Kopyto battling 'Crazy Glue' judge's misconduct
2006-10Oct6b	Globe clip: Judge to face misconduct probe (Kopyto case)

2007-2010

*2007-03-19	Blanco: Chile--the lesson that Venezuela learned?
*2007-07July	Celia Hart: How can you not be a Trotskyist (in Cuba)? (on file)
*2007-Aug15	Blanco: Struggle of indigenous Andean-Amazon culture (on file)
2007-08-21-p1	Caracas discusses Trotsky assassination (sample p.1 -- on file)
2010-5May	*Palmer, Brian: Review of Jan Willem Stutje: "Ernest Mandel: "A Rebel's Dream Deferred, Verso, London, 2009 – (on file)*

Left Caucus Newsletter

Published by the Steering Committee of the ONDP Left Caucus
Station M, Box 107
Toronto, Ont. M6S 4T2

Summer 1990
Vol. 3 No. 6

Greening the NDP through Workers' Control

By Ron Bobker
Oakville NDP

A review of the policy proposal: "Greening the Party, Greening the Province: A vision for the Ontario NDP". This policy proposal was coordinated by Doug Macdonald and written principally by Philip Jessup.

My first impression upon reading the report was that, at last, the ONDP establishment has realized that the root cause of Canada's environmental disaster is the capitalist system. In the preface to the report, Bob Rae writes: "The view of people as endless consumers, as calculators, as atoms all competing for material success is seen not just as shallow and inadequate, but as dangerous. We can't afford an unlimited capitalism: left to its devices it will destroy the planet and all of us who live on it." Presumably, anyone who agrees with this viewpoint is morally bound to do something about limiting capitalism as a first step to preventing planetary destruction. Bob Rae tells us: "This paper seeks to spark a debate, and our party must be a leader in the debate. There is an urgent, compelling need to change the society in which we live... The appetite to consume is satisfied at the expense of the rest of the world, and ... of future generations." And again, he writes: "While traditional social democratic values have been based on premises about growth, and the central questions about how power is divided and shared between people, the new environmental ethic requires that we re-examine the quality of our present growth and rethink its meaning to include our relationship to the land, the earth, the air, the water, and to future generations... Our party's responsibility is to explain why we take controversial stands, not to back away from them because of conflict. In doing so we are keeping faith with the best traditions of our party, and equally important, with the people whose interests we are fighting to protect."

Bob asks, "Are we ready to become a green party?" If no, he says, then we are on apparently safe ground because fewer changes will be required, but at the price of leadership "in the creation of a new consciousness, a new awareness, a new politics." If yes, "then we are talking about a party with a different value system... It is certainly no guarantor of electoral success, but it does mean renewed leadership for the party on issues that move millions of Canadians...."

Thus, belatedly, Bob Rae has accepted what the Left Caucus has always said: namely, the NDP must stake out its policy on an ideology of change and progress, and not on electoral expediency.

The content of the report is rich in slogans, but poor in imaginative programming. For example, the **Executive Summary** states that working people "have learned from experience how easily corporations exploit concern for a cleaner environment by holding workers, communities, and governments to ransom." But under the heading **Reform of the Economic System** it talks about "reducing the province's energy intensity (sic) by 3.5 per cent per year" and by fostering the growth of private energy service companies that are allowed to com-

Continued on page 4

National Action Committee on the Status of Women President, Judy Rebick, a Left Caucus supporter, joins New Democrat MP Dawn Black in supporting NDP leader Audrey McLaughlin's strong stand for freedom of choice.

Is socialism dead in Eastern Europe?

By Harry Kopyto
St. Paul's NDP

On the surface, the political movement sweeping East Europe appears to be a reaction against socialism to which some defenders of the status quo in Canada have already gleefully administered the last rites. Many anti-Stalinist forces have called for the creation of a free market, loosening of state controls, elimination of central planning and introduction of private property to eliminate the economic crisis and drop in growth that has fueled the current crisis. Notably, few have called for the abolition of state subsidies for food and shelter, health and transportation and the policy guaranteeing employment to all.

These "benefits" have been central to the industrial progress made by the East European countries since WWII. By mobilizing all of society's resources, minimal standards of literacy, health and education were established virtually overnight. The transformation of these technologically backward countries into industrialised states was compressed into a few short decades with the development of massive extraction projects and heavy industrialisation through social direction.

However, Soviet Russia nurtured privileged bureaucracies in the East European countries, which usurped power from the nascent workers' movement, banned opposition currents, abolished independent anti-fascist movements, and imposed their own home-bred leaders on the East European governments. Ruthless dictatorship, national oppression, suppression of critical thought, regimentation of scientific, cultural and artistic opinions and the physical annihilation of all those who opposed Stalin made a mockery of a liberatory socialism and deformed the achievements of socialist property relations beyond recognition.

From the mid-1920's onward, Stalinism discredited socialism throughout the world. Anti-Communism was exploited for decades by proponents of capitalism in order to smear political parties such as the NDP and identify all efforts to create a socialist society with the caricature of socialism in the Soviet Union and East Europe.

The leaders of the regimes of the West, epitomised by West Germany's Helmut Kohl, have exploited the disintegration of the East European economies and the yearning of the masses for an increase in their standard of living to elect their surrogates.

Continued on page 4

From 31-1993-F.G. of USC

Aug. 19
8,

The Forward Group declares its solidarity with the Fourth International, the world party of revolutionary socialism.

The Fourth International carries on in the great liberatory traditions established by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky. As Stalinism suffers its most severe crisis of this century, the analysis of Leon Trotsky shines through with clarity and vision.

Trotskyism has now been thoroughly vindicated by the unfolding of history, as humanity discards the aberration of Stalinist falsification and oppression.

Yet, in the midst of this epochal crisis, the Socialist Workers Party (U.S.A.) and Communist League (Canada) have severed all their ties to the Fourth International.

This wholesale abandonment of Trotskyism reflects the utter bankruptcy of these groups, which have jettisoned their own past at the very moment that it has become most relevant and meaningful. The adaption to Castroite influences and rejection of the heritage of Leon Trotsky and his theory of the permanent revolution mark an irreversible process of degeneration of these organizations and relegate them to irrelevant sects.

We, comrades of the Forward Group, trace our lineage to the earliest leaders of the Canadian Trotskyist movement, to Maurice

Spector and Jack MacDonald, founding members of the Communist Party of Canada who, after attending the 1926 Congress of the Communist International in Moscow, returned to fight against the Stalinist degeneration of the party and founded North American Trotskyism in Canada, with Spector expelled in 1928 for his efforts. We stand by the Program of the 1921 Congress of the 3rd International, on the tradition of mass mobilizations around transitional and democratic demands and the building of a party that can unify the working class and link concrete struggles for immediate demands to the fight for socialist democracy. We trace our roots to those comrades who founded the Trotskyist movement and participated in the Left Opposition with Leon Trotsky. We march in the footsteps of Ruth Bullock, who pioneered Trotskyism in western Canada and who dedicated her whole life to build a Trotskyist vanguard. We trace our roots to Paddy Stanton and Joe Meslin (recently deceased), Trotskyist trade union militants with broad influence and respect whose contributions to Trotskyism span over half a century. We march in the footsteps of Ross Dowson, former member of the International Secretariat and a key comrade whose efforts to reunite the forces of world Trotskyism, along with Joe Hanson's from the SWP, were instrumental in founding the Reunification Congress in 1963. As the leader of Canadian Trotskyism for over 50 years, Dowson's insight and understanding enabled the Canadian movement to pioneer entry into mass labour formations resulting in the Canadian comrades experiencing a rich and extended imple-

mentation in the Canadian labour party, the CCF - NDP since 1933. The result was a movement that was able to export cadres to England, New Zealand and Australia as well as emerge as the most significant pole of attraction in the youth radicalization in Canada in the 1960s.

When the ultra-left currents that infected the youth radicalization of the 1960s threw the Canadian official organization of the Fourth International off balance, we were obliged to sever our links with the League for Socialist Action (LSA) in 1973-74. Now that the formal successor of that organization has itself succumbed to the terminal illness of sectarianism and abandoned the last vestige of its commitment to Trotskyism as we had predicted, we proudly proclaim our solidarity with the international association which represents the historic continuity of the Trotskyist movement and traditions, the Fourth International.

Long Live the Fourth International!

Long Live Trotskyism!

August 8, 1990

The Forward Group
Per:
Harry Kopyto
Gordon Deutsch

Harry Kopyto
Gordon Deutsch

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HARRY KOPYTO
211 Dunvegan Road
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1 416 322 1664

August 28, 1990

Secretary, International Executive Committee,
Fourth International, c/o
International Viewpoint,
2 rue Richard Lenoir,
93108 Montreuit, France.

Dear Sir:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Forward Group.

We enclose a cheque in the amount of $250.00, Canadian funds, made payable to the Fourth International. A motion was made at a meeting attended by our Toronto members of the Forward Group on August 22nd, 1990,. to make a contribution in this amount to express our solidarity with the Fourth International in general and to give financial support to the work of the Fourth International in the Eastern European states in particular.

We also enclose a copy of a recent statement adopted by our group on August 8, 1990, previously sent to International Viewpoint.

Comradely,

The Forward Group
Per:

Harry Kopyto

Left Caucus Newsletter

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Spring 1991
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The challenge before the NDP convention

By Gord Doctorow
Oriole NDP

When the people of Ontario chose an NDP government in September, 1990, they were voting for a solution to the looming recession. The effects of the recession were already evident: plant shutdowns , rising unemployment, increases in welfare rolls, withering of social services, flourishing of food banks, and a growing population of working poor .

NDP-labor alliance: where do we go from here?

It was not only the economy that weighed on their minds but the notion of an urgent reordering of the priorities of society in order to ensure a decent quality of life. Environmental concerns figured in a wide variety of issues. Tenants wanted affordable rents. The thousands of homeless wanted a safe, clean place to live in. Women were seeking affordable childcare and pay equity. And so did people of color and the disabled. Native people were struggling for land claim settlements. People of color wanted the justice system to treat them with fairness and respect for their dignity by having civilian control of the police. Many people were mobilized by various social movements during the elections to press for these concerns.

These challenges have taken on an urgency as the recession deepens while expectations remain high. The NDP responded with an electoral program of radical reform: the Agenda for People. This program took dead aim at "the big money interests" and was a bold and fighting declaration that envisaged social justice and redistribution of wealth.

However, many items in our program have yet to be adequately addressed, cast as they are, in the shadow of the deepening recession. For example, the promise of 20,000 non-profit housing units this year awaits action. A small increase in social assistance rates has been implemented but falls short of meeting urgent needs. Metro Toronto region is in dire need of implementation of the Agenda's promises to extend and improve public transit.

Clearly, the Agenda for People, already partially implemented, was designed to meet the real needs of the population. But the bad news is that the recession is hampering its implementation by creating alarming numbers of lay-

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For mass circulation NDP-labor paper

By Harry Kopyto
St. Andrew-St. Patrick NDP

When the NDP in Ontario won the election last September, every daily newspaper in the province opposed the election of an NDP government. The media unanimously ended up backing the Liberal Party, which was best poised to block an NDP victory when it became apparent that the NDP might take power.

The newspaper chains -- Southam, Torstar, the Thompson chain and the others -- are part of the network of monopolies that dominate dissemination of information to the public, both through print and electronic means.

Not only do the owners of the media share the same social and economic interests as the Big Business establishment, but they frequently see their role as one of "influencing" public opinion. The impact exerted by the media is considerable. It has eliminated coverage of important issues (the **Globe**, for example, fired its last remaining labor reporter recently while augmenting its stable of business writers). It has attacked the NDP during elections while wooing NDP supporters at other times (**The Toronto Star**). It has generally promoted a cynical attitude to social change or actively promoting a campaign against it. The media has proven loyal and useful to the status quo.

The election victory of the NDP should not lull us into a false sense of security about the impact of the media. Editorial writers are now exerting pressure to prevent the NDP from "alienating the business community", "undermining confidence in the economic stability of the province" and taking radical measures. The common assumption of the media pundits is that ideological excesses cannot be tolerated in recessionary times.

The Party membership, however, can counteract these efforts to set the agenda for the NDP government. A collective exchange of views on the key issues of the day, permitting the broadest participation of the NDP membership can be insured by creating our own newspaper, able to challenge the establishment media both within and outside the Party. It is futile and naïve to expect fair treatment from the media conglomerates. We need to create a regular public paper published in the interest of working people, one as loyal to the labor movement as the establishment media is to the business elite.

A public labor paper should solicit views from its readers on all the burning issues of the day and open its pages to all tendencies on the left. It should give support to various struggles, act as the voice of the labor movement, as the organizer of the NDP, as a fund-raising vehicle, as a discussion bulletin and as an educator.

Convention resolutions have already been proposed calling for the publication of the Ontario Democrat with greater frequency (monthly) and opening up its pages to the membership on a regular basis. In time, the Ontario Democrat could become a daily paper distributed publicly and counteracting the establishment media. It is the duty and responsibility of socialists and the labor movement to challenge the monopoly of the Big Business press. While it would take time, money and much effort to develop such a mass, public organ, the challenge is

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Left Cauc Newsletter

shed by the Steering
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Station M, Box 107
Toronto, Ont. M6S 4T2

June-July 1991
Vol. 3 No. 3
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Left Caucus program at the Ontario NDP convention

At the March 1991 Convention of the Ontario NDP, the Left Caucus supported two candidates for Provincial Executive. The ONDP Left Caucus ran Member-at-Large candidate Harry Kopyto on the following program:

For an Independent and Socialist Canada

Ontario is sliding into an extended recession and de-industrialization of the economy — the result of the Free Trade Agreement and a high interest (low dollar) policy designed to benefit continental corporations. The continentalization of the North American economy into a single free trade region, soon likely to include Mexico, is already draining away our best paying and highly skilled jobs in industries such as steel and auto parts. It is eroding the ability of governments to maintain social security measures. The recession is hurting the most vulnerable in our midst: youth and the old, women and minorities, tenants and students, the poor and the disabled. Businesses close their doors. Welfare rolls swell. The jobless walk the streets. Even wealthy Toronto has depression-style food banks and thousands of homeless. Yet the NDP holds provincial power for the first time in history, carrying the hopes and expectations of the people who elected us to protect them in this crisis of an uncaring capitalist system.

In the era of trade blocs and fierce trade competition, capitalism is leading us to permanently lowered living standards and chronic unemployment. Which road will lead us out of this morass? The **Left Caucus** believes that the current economic crisis calls for a bold initiative towards socialism, a democratic plan to take hold of our economic base before it is too late, and preserve what wealth still remains through a dynamic public planned economy. Then we can begin to keep the promises which won us power and maintain the credibility needed to make us the party of the future.

Socialist Measures to Combat De-industrialization and Unemployment

- For public ownership of businesses that are threatened by de-industrialization and recession.
- Give workers the option to co-own and manage runaway plants in cooperation with public authorities.
- For a strong public presence in the financial sector to allow government to implement low-cost credit.
- Establish workplace democracy through workers' self-management in crown and government corporations.

Social Justice for All!

- For a fully funded Human Rights Commission, accountable to those it is designed to protect and for the legalization of the right to sue for discrimination.
- For affirmative action programs and training to permit disabled persons, women, Natives and people of color proportionate representation at senior levels of administration in all government institutions.
- For an independent civilian board to investigate and review allegations of police abuse.
- For public participation in control of the legal profession to stop preferential treatment in favor of establishment lawyers (Lang/Michener, Outerbridge) and suppression of critically-minded lawyers (Kopyto, Codina).

For an Activist Party!

- For a party which recruits activists from the women's, antiwar, environmental, and anti-racist movements.
- For participation in these movements as New Democrats and building the NDP as the feminist, antiwar, anti-racist and environmentalist party of Ontario.
- For a strategy which combines support for the social movements with a strategy to win labor to power.

Support for NDP Municipal Campaigns!

- Encourage full NDP label municipal slates in cities and towns across Ontario.
- Support NDP mayoralty candidates to promote the concept of labor to power at the municipal level.

For a Labor-Socialist Press!

- Open up the **Ontario Democrat** to contributions from all the ridings and increase frequency of publication as a means of developing an informed and motivated grassroots party.
- Promote a public mass labor paper that challenges the monopoly of the Big Business press.

Environmental Action Now!

- Expropriate chronic corporate polluters.
- Allow workers to control health and safety issues on the shop floor.

For an Independent and Dynamic Youth Section!

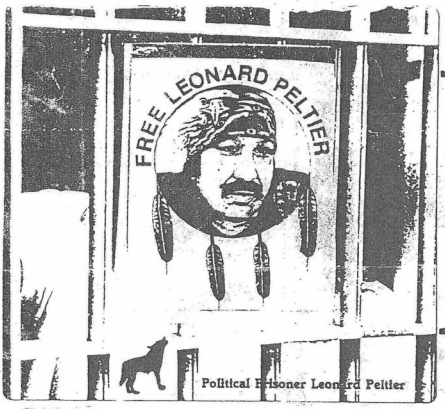
- For a dynamic, autonomous youth movement which has the resources to win youth to the party.
- For Young New Democrats clubs in universities and high schools throughout Ontario.
- For a strong youth movement that can energize and inspire the party.

For Affordable and Plentiful Quality Housing!

- Keep the promise to cap rental increases to the rate of inflation.
- For mass, public housing projects under residents' control to fight homelessness and poverty.

The NDP stands at a crossroads. If the landlords can invest thousands of dollars to tell New York bankers not to invest in Ontario in order to get the laws which they want to get passed, the NDP must be really committed to stand by the program which allowed it to win power. Socialism is no longer just a desirable idea. It is the solution to meet the burning crisis of our times. If we do not act now, there will be nothing left to save.

The Global Struggle for Justice Continues for Aboriginal Peoples



"THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE IN MY CASE IS ONE AND THE SAME WITH THE 400 YEAR STRUGGLE OF MY PEOPLE TO PROTECT THEIR LAND, AND LIVE IN THEIR OWN WAY IN PEACE. I AM A PRISONER OF THE LONGEST WAR IN THE HISTORY OF THIS CONTINENT."

--Leonard Peltier

"Without struggle there is no progress"

PETITION IN SUPPORT OF /JUSTICE/FREEDOM /EQUALITY

LEONARD PELTIER

NORTH AMERICAN NATIVE POLITICAL PRISONER

On July 29, 1991, a new chapter begins through a legal hearing in Fargo, North Dakota, for LEONARD PELTIER, NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN AND WORLDLY RECOGNIZED AS THE FOREMOST ABORIGINAL POLITICAL PRISONER, which in the months ahead could result in his freedom. LEONARD PELTIER was targetted by the F.B.I. for criminal prosecution in the United States for his part in defense of the aboriginal people and their land; illegally extradited in 1976 from Canada to the U.S. on the basis of F.B.I. falsified evidence; convicted and sentenced to two life terms for the deaths of two F.B.I. agents. For almost 16 years, Leonard Peltier continues to remain in prison for a crime he did not commit. HIS FRAME-UP AND FALSE IMPRISONMENT IS A COVER-UP FOR THE CONTINUING DENIAL of the sovereign right of indigenous people by governments and corporations exploiting the Earth for profit.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, CONDEMN Leonard Peltier's false extradition and the total disregard by North American governments of the fundamental rights of aboriginal peoples and their nations. WE CALL UPON THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TO RECOGNIZE AND ANNUL LEONARD PELTIER'S FRAUDULENT EXTRADITION AND THROUGH A NEWLY SUBMITTED PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTION (M 496) BY LIBERA MP WARREN ALLMAND TAKE STEPS TO RECTIFY THE INJUSTICE AND SEEK LEONARD PELTIER'S RETURN TO CANADA. We demand that justice be made possible through such means and applaud the recent commitment for support by the New Democrat Party (NDP) of Canada.

NAME	ADDRESS	SIGNATURE
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CATHERINE CARR	51 WINEVA AVE M4E 2T7 TOR.	
VALERIE HUNNIS	1043 DAVENPORT ROAD	
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Dan Heap	215 College St. #218 - M5T1R1	
Carl Sinclair	5 OLD MAPLE LANE KITCHENER	

LEONARD PELTIER DEFENSE COMMITTEE (CANADA)
43 CHANDLER DR, SCARBOROUGH, ONTARIO
CANADA M1G 1Z1 TEL: (416) 439-1893

LETTER TO HARRY (Harry Paine, Winnipeg) from the Forward Group, Toronto
by Gord Doctorow

Aug. 4,1991

Your letters have certainly helped to stimulate discussions at the Forward Group meetings in Toronto. The delay in responding is a consequence of giving comrades time to think about your ideas and then engaging in some structured discussions. Harry Kopyto and I, in particular, have been organizinq the presentations. This letter will not attempt to deal with or answer all the questions raised but rather to come to grips with what we consider are the most important points of discussion for the future of Trotskyism in Canada and in the world setting.

Before I launch into that discussion, I want to draw attention to two documents enclosed in this letter. One is Harry Kopyto's summary of the Socialist Challenge/Gauche Socialiste convention — not a very flattering report — and the other is Harry's report of the Halifax NDP convention. I know they will be of use and interest to you. By the way, the report of the SC/GS convention is a collaborative effort. Another comrade, Jeff Smith, who accompanied Harry to the convention, contributed to the ideas.

Forward Report

In addition, the Forward Group held a barbecue social earlier this summer at which the report was presented and discussed. The event included our close periphery — people like FC and BC, DP, JC — and a guest from out of town, Jerry Houle. You may recall Jerry as one of our longstanding trade union comrades (now retired) in the Vancouver area. The discussion expressed itself in several very important areas: rebuilding a Trotskyist vanguard in Canada, our attitude to BW, our attitude to the Fourth International, and the coordination and development of a Canadian Trotskyist archive project.

Rebuilding a Trotskyist Vanguard in Canada

On the question of' rebuilding a Trotskyist vanguard in Canada, discussion turned towards the nature of the class struggle in Canada, its distinctiveness from that in the U.S., and the fact that, by and large, most of the Trotskyist sects don't believe that the Canadian working class is worthy of consideration *ipso facto*. That is why Canadian nationalism is seen as counter-revolutionary by people like *Socialist Challenge*, the International Socialists, and the Sparts *(Spartacus League).* We, on the other hand, see the Canadian working class playing a vanguard role in the North American class struggle because of its successful construction of a labor party and especially the election of an NDP government in the most strategic province in Canada at a critical juncture in the reshaping of the economic world order by the bourgeoisie. Needless to say, even a moderate NDP government seriously hampers their plans. Conrad Black [newspaper tycoon] even went public with a reproach to the people of Ontario stating that he would not invest in Ontario because of their stupidity in electing an NDP government. The point

that emerges from this description is that the Canadian working class has shown the possibility of shifting the relationship of class forces and is confronting the bourgeoisie with a high stakes showdown.

(This situation is not without contradictions of course. On the one hand, Rae's government is moving towards more and more pro-labor legislation, including anti-scab laws; on the other hand, it is sending out the message that it is not anti-business and that it wants to work in a new partnership with business. This means no nationalization interventions and the notion of company shares for workers. But Rae cannot change the objective character of continental restructuring, of a bourgeoisie that is competing with other trading blocs and wishes to maintain its rate of profit by cutting into workers' benefits, wages, and jobs. The objective economic struggle will inevitably sharpen class conflict.)

We feel that the rebuilding of a Trotskylst vanguard will still proceed through the NDP, which is far more **on the way,** rather than **in the way**. The class is not in advance of the NDP. A case in point is the hue and cry over the NDP's abolition of the oath to the Queen. Many workers got sucked Into the media-bred indignation. Another more telling point is the negative reaction to the NDP's budget on the grounds that it is spiralling up the debt. As modest as the budget was in terms of addressing social needs, because it left out taxing the rich and public ownership, it nonetheless offered important benefits to the most needy sectors of society. In addition, the budget's maintenance of public sector jobs cut across the plans of bourgeois governments across Canada to cut wages and jobs. Nonetheless, the workers in Ontario have yet to understand, aside from a minority of organized labor, the class significance of the ONDP's budget. That shows the NDP is in advance in many important respects of workers' consciousness.

Of course, the NDP government's failure to mobilize workers, to challenge the bourgeoisie more frontal!y, to attempt to deal with plant closures by appeals to business-labor partnerships reinforce and sustain the low level of class struggles. That is where the left must play its role. We need to build the class links, class program, and internal challenges within the Party. So the NDP remains for us a central challenge to building a revolutionary vanguard.

Our attitude to Weisleder and the Fourth International

As for the question of BW, it seems that nobody at the social had much good to say about him. You will note, from Harry's report, that we consider his organization incapable of rising to the challenge of building a coherent vanguard. Even JC, who is very close to the Fourth international (he translates the Hong Kong comrades' articles Into English for *International Viewpoint*, while urging us to get closer to the Fl, expressed his skepticism towards BW's group. The issue of our relationship to the FI is unfortunately intertwined with our attitude to SC. We intend to maintain our separate identity, and maintain an informal sympathizer status to the FI and a distant comradeliness to SC.

Canadian Trotskyist Archives

On the question of a Trotskyist archive. This issue came up in a phone conversation between me and Peter Matilainen (Edmonton — formerly of the RMG). He proposed that we (the Forward Group) initiate a discussion with other Trotskyist currents to pull together documents, letters, pamphlets, and other publications of the Canadian Trotskyist movement in order to preserve our common heritage and to provide a basis for constructing a valid history. This came up in connection with my complaint to him of BW's so-called history of Canadian Trotskyism, which is inaccurate and scurrilous (especially towards Ross). Well, I reported all that to the comrades and sympathizers at the social. And we decided to launch such an effort. JH has been contacting people like Ruth Bullock, Al Engler and Jean Rands, among others. Most of Ruth's stuff has been donated to UBC; however, we have a list of what's at the UBC archives. Engler and Rands were emphatically uninterested. But JC, who moves around a lot, is enthusiastic about other possibilities. We are also aware of two other archive sites: University of Toronto (Ross Dowson's materials) and the national archives in Ottawa (interviews with Ross conducted by Wayne Roberts). Our goal is to annotate what's in all these places, collect more materials from donors, annotate the new materials, and choose a site to deposit them. That work is now in progress. We intend under Lois Bedard's signature to Invite the participation and input of other interested parties soon.

The Issue of a Bolshevik Model

Your comment, "The model of a Leninist Bolshevik combat party may not meet the needs of this and the coming period of history" requires a response from us. We believe it is a legitimate question because we are rational empiricists. We need to check our theoretical ideas against emerging reality. The question arises: what is the emergent reality that points up the challenge to the established model? Is it the failure of the experiment in the Soviet Union? Is it a commentary on the plethora of sectarian, ultraleft, and Stalinist groupings that all call themselves Marxist-Leninist? Or do you have a detailed theoretical analysis in mind?

On the question of the Soviet. Union, we believe that Trotsky's analysis as stated in “The Revolution Betrayed” gives a clear answer. It is not the model of Bolshevism that has betrayed [workers and socialists]; it is the epigones *(betrayers, distorters --Ed.)* of Lenin, the Stalinist bureaucracy objectively created out of the conditions of isolation of the Russian Revolution, that have betrayed Marxism, Bolshevism, and the working class. But that. is old news and there is not much to discuss except to review the arguments that Trotsky and our movement has put forward in numerous publications. There is, however, a serious point to consider in connection with the decay of the Soviet bureaucracy and the chaotic conditions of *perestroika (Soviet Russia premier Gorbachov's failed attempt to reform the bureaucracy –ed.)* And that is, whence will come the political revolution, what leadership is required to move the struggle forward? We still think that a Bolshevik leadership, with a clear revolutionary program, disciplined cadres, free internal discussion, and decisive ability to act is required.

As for the caricatures of Bolshevism represented in the various groups, these are ascribable to objective conditions. One of the most important is the longstanding hegemony of Stalinism, which has confused and divided the revolutionary left; another is the hegemony of Social Democracy *(generally, the mass labor-socialist parties with historical roots in the Second International – ed.)*, whose opportunism in situations of promising gains, have helped to foster the kind of revolutionary impatience that leads to ultraleftism and sectarianism. Of course, there is the all important fact that capitalism has not exhausted its motor forces of economic expansion. The defeat of the Nicaraguan struggle and imperialism's successful intervention in Iraq and the Middle East have strengthened its grip in the semi-colonial world. Furthermore, imperialism has gone a lot farther than Marxists had previously anticipated in terms of multinational collaboration in trade (trading blocs); for example, the EEC *(EU)* and the Canada-U.S. (soon to include Mexico) Free Trade Agreement. (This stabilization of structured trade relations along with the opening of new markets in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union accounts for the continued buoyancy – albeit with recessionary tendencies embedded – to continue for a while. But that also points to a renewal of class struggle as workers scramble to maintain their previous gains. And, of course, we can anticipate that the rate of profit will continue to drop in the longer run leading to new possibilities for socialism.)

How can a socialist, revolutionary left meet the challenges? We know that the bourgeoisie has shown itself quite capable of absorbing opposition to the capitalist system. It has managed to divide and conquer over and over again. The danger for the left is the abandonment of the legacy of socialist history and analysis by throwing out the Bolshevik baby with the Stalinist bathwater. That is not to suggest a slavish repetition of old formulas and a disregard of real struggles as they go on. But it means to be clear on where we're coming from, to learn the lessons of history, to reconstruct a cadre that is able to absorb these lessons and engage in struggle. It seems to us that the Bolshevik model remains as the only historical form capable of rising to that challenge. The experience of centrism Is a kind of voluntarism, where all kinds of radicals come forward with many ideas.

But these ideas and their capacity to sustain the lulls dissipate because there is no conscious forging of praxis. Revolutionary struggle needs theory and constant education in order for a correct practice to emerge.

Some thoughts on Centrism

Thinking back in our experiences in single issue movements, the NDP, and various coalitions, we recognize that the best elements came to us. Out of their engagement in struggle, they sought those who had a coherent analysis and practice as a way of continuing on a higher and more durable plane of activity. I suspect that many of the same types are involved in CHOICES. Can an organization like CHOICES supplant a revolutionary vanguard? Is it capable of drawing together a balance sheet of its experiences? Will it develop a leadership which is representative of the rank and file? Will minority viewpoints get expressed and worked out while maintaining a common

front? These are the issues that have preoccupied our thinking from Lenin to Trotsky to Cannon.

There is another consideration to take into account about CHOICES. The kinds of activities they engage in are as diverse and broad as a political party. For example, the presentation of an alternative budget to that of the Tory government, while dramatic and impressive, is also precisely the task of the NDP. In reality, CHOICES parallels the NDP's role while not engaging in the struggle for electoral seats. But is this not posed? How do you and other NDP activists resolve this duality? It appears that CHOICES is heading into competition with the NDP. Alternative possibilities are for it to constitute itself as the NDP's extra-parliamentary wing (à la Waffle?) or to enter as a left formation within the NDP. In either event, logically there should be some kind of format relationship with the NDP. Unless, of course, CHOICES constitutes itself as a rival party.

Naturally, this discussion does not solve the problem of what we Trotskyists should be doing. We have always moved out boldly when radical formations and possibilities have presented themselves. Perhaps CHOICES is one such milieu. In Toronto, there is no large radical movement outside the NDP. There .are activists of course: Native rights, Black rights, women's rights, environmental movements, antiwar groups, etc. However, to a large extent these groups are represented inside the ONDP through various committees, like the ethno-cultural committees. We are trying to find ways of linking up with them through the Left Caucus. The most active people in the NDP seem to be involved in municipal politics. This year, the NDP is running Jack Layton for mayor of Toronto and this is helping to establish a serious NDP municipal slate. Other slates are springing up in the suburbs as well. The Left Caucus is challenged to make connections in these areas as well. The objective problem lies in our small numbers. How do we maximize our opportunities without spreading ourselves too thin? That is an ongoing discussion.

Miscellaneous Comments

We agree with your assessment of (Barry) W. and the CUPW situation. BW is not a member of CUPW; however, his companion and comrade EB is. We don't really see where collaboration will be too fruitful with SC. BW does not involve himself in the NDP in a consistent way and his trade-union activity seems to me to be a little substitutionist. Certainly we don't want to put any barriers in the way of working together. But we have very different lines, and we know that BW's main idea is to absorb us into his group, probably to be the NDP caucus comrades. We are not impressed with the confusion that is rampant in their organization, and we have no intention of dissipating our energies in hopeless factional fights. We have a different model of building Trotskyism. We don't think that a true FI can be built without sections that are rooted in national struggles. And if we were to summarize the key difference between ourselves and SC, it would be that we take the Canadian class struggle seriously and don't regard it as some abstract component of all class struggles.
Comradely yours,
Gord Doctorow

"Festival of the Left"

Forward Group Presentation August 16, 1991

There is a touch of irony in participating in a meeting in August, 1991 entitled the Festival of the Left. Now is not the time for the Left to engage in festivities. The Left is in a state of crisis. Socialism is everywhere being questioned. Marxism and Leninism appear to be rejected by the one-third of the world who had embraced post-capita1ist forms of socialist organization. Countries that have adopted socialist property relations are looking to capitalism as a panacea. Everywhere, the credibility and viability of socialist politics, especially Marxist politics, has been put into issue. This, therefore, is a time for sober reflection, for reassessment and for trying to develop a dialogue to try to understand how we have arrived at the end of the century which was supposed to see the birth of socialism with the socialist movement itself in such a state of crisis. While this evening can only be the beginning of such a dialogue among a very few of us active in revolutionary politics, it is nonetheless a welcome dialogue, an overdue dialogue which should have begun decades ago, but which is better taking place late than never.

There are three sectors of the Left which are called upon to participate in this dialogue to clarify the current situation. One sector is that portion that was identified with the politics of Stalinism. Another sector is the one currently identified with political thought which might be broadly described as social democratic. The third can be characterized as a dialogue with ultra-leftist, sectarian, vanguardist formations.

The Left that has been identified historically with Stalinist politics is in the deepest state of crisis. This left came to birth with the heritage of Marx and Engels, Plekhanov and Lenin. It burst upon the second decade of this century with the magnificent success of the Russian Revolution, an aura of libertarian socialism, a brilliant political victory that marked the beginning of the end of the capitalist era. But very soon, various adherents to the Russian Revolution began to identify the interests of the Soviet state with the fate of the international working class, and suppressed all criticism of that state.

What that meant, was that for decades the most conscious and revolutionary forces in the world were reduced to apologists for Stalinism. It meant that in the 1930s, the social democrats were regarded as the main enemy in Germany. Instead of building a united front against the fascists, internecine warfare was the norm. It meant that an entire antiwar movement was suddenly derailed by the Stalin-Hitler pact, which could not be justified by any conditions, and which resulted in illusions about the possibilities of peace with fascism. It meant the transformation of the Communist Parties of the world into instruments of the Soviet Union's foreign policy, designed to exert pressure on established governments instead of to develop independent revolutionary struggles and parties. It meant alliances with so-called progressive elements in capitalist parties, instead of

committing oneself unreservedly to creating a labour political party which would represent only the working class and its allies in competition for state power. It meant reducing the creative and independent processes involved in Marxism to a liturgical reiteration of loyalty to Stalin, making a mockery and a caricature of Marxism and discrediting it among the intelligentsia of the world. It meant adhering to a philosophy which saw the Soviet Union winning the world to socialism by its example, if it only would be allowed to develop in peace – an illusoinary vision of peaceful coexistence which was used to justify the betrayal of independent revolutionary struggles against states with which the Soviet Union had friendly relations. It meant that the ideas of socialism became discredited, and that revolutionary forces became demoralized and disintegrated as a result of the impact that the Stalinist dictatorship had on the most fundamental and basic ideas of democracy in the eyes of all thinking people. Stalinism set back the struggle for socialism by decades.

The end result is that the worldwide forces that supported the Soviet Union and identified with it are now in a total state of disarray, marginalization and crisis.

With respect to the dialogue which should be taking place with social democracy, because of the accommodation of social democracy to capitalism and its explicit rejection of most forms of revolutionary struggle, this dialogue is one which is difficult to institute. This does not mean that reformist politics is not in a state of crisis. The program of liberal reforms which the NDP Government of Ontario is committed to, is proving incapable of dealing with the structural crisis of capitalism. The integration of the Canadian state apparatus into a continentalist free trade structure, the destruction of Canada's industrial base, the elimination of hundreds of thousands of good-paying, unionized jobs in industry, and the move by the Conservative Government to give up what little sovereignty Canada retains over its economy in favour of U.S. capitalism, is threatening to render unattainable the NDP's reform program, destroying the safety net of social welfare measures and permanently eroding our industrial base. For social democracy too, basic questions are posed, as conservative forces take the initiative and attempt to undermine the Rae Government. A mixed economy does not appear to be solving the basic problems of capitalism, and as time goes on, the NDP itself will either lose power with the initiative returning to the capitalists or else be forced to develop a socialist strategy which can mobilize its base of support behind a program to implement socialism, to return ownership of our natural resources to the public domain, and to create a democratically planned and publicly owned, viable industrial sector.

For the ultra-left and vanguardist groups, the question of the relevance of their practice and theory also stands in sharp focus. Many of these groups for decades have wilted on the vines, retaining their ideological purity at the expense of actually getting involved in struggles with working people, whose lives are rooted in the daily grind. Many of these groups have disappeared entirely, so that a dialogue with them would be posthumous, therefore, of limited relevance. Those who have survived must be congratulated for their sheer determination; but prevailing, not surviving, is the name of the game. Those groups that have had since the late 1960s to test their own concepts of revolutionary politics should tell us what movements they have influenced, what recruits they have won, and

what victories, however partial, they have achieved for the working class and its allies. Most importantly, what do they have to say to workers at their present level of consciousness? And in the absence of a record of active intervention in the working class and being able to influence important events or win adherents to their politics, they too must reconsider the efficacy of their politics, the viability of their political positions, and attempt to develop an effective strategy of implementation based upon a process of renewal and rethinking.

For the Forward Group which I represent today, we occupy a unique position in the spectrum of the Canadian left. First and foremost, we trace our heritage back to the early Marxists and the leaders of the Russian Revolution, but see a continuity with the ideas of Leon Trotsky. We feel that in the current crisis of Stalinism, the tendency has been to throw out the baby with the bath water. Though we understand why there there is a tendency to reject Leninism along with Stalinism, we see a discontinuity between the two, and see Stalinism arising as an aberration and a detour in the evolution to socialism, caused by the backwardness and isolation of the Russian Revolution, rather than as an inevitable product of it.

It must never be forgotten, that while socialism may be in crisis, both ideologically and in terms of the state structures of those who nominally embrace it, capitalism is also proving incapable of solving the basic problems of humanity. In terms of its ability to deliver the goods, the capitalist system is establishing its viability only on the basis of maintaining itself as a war economy, visualized, the recent explosion of military production resulting from the new world order of George Bush; or by deepening the process of super-exploitation, a fundamental characteristic of the tendency of capitalism to restructure itself into three major world trade blocs, and the increased mobility of capital investment, which now changes countries as often as shoes, if it can avoid paying the social costs for its industrial production, maintain a high profit-low wage ratio, and avoid the constrictions of unionism and government regulation.

While we envisage a desirable future of humanity encompassing social ownership of productive property, we place a heavy emphasis on ensuring that the productive process itself takes place under direct worker's control. Worker's democracy has been the missing factor in the workers' state. Workers control of a democratically planned economy and an effective system of councils to manage all public institutions are an essential part of any socialist vision, which can inspire and retain the allegiance of the population.

Finally, in the Canadian context, we seek to integrate our theory with practice by intervening in the broad mass movements of the class. We reject concepts that socialism can be built by standing on the sidelines and maintaining our purity. Along with Lenin, we reject concepts of "Red" unions and a separate but parallel structure in the labour movement and its political formations. We seek to integrate ourselves into ail the major struggles of the working class in every sense of the word, so that we can influence the course of development of the most advanced workers. For this reason, the focus of our politics always remains independent labour politics, which in Canada, means the New

Democratic Party, which poses simultaneously both the need for electing labour to power, as well as the need to win the NDP itself to a socialist program. This can only be done by rejecting Stalinism, rejecting reformism, and rejecting ultra-leftism. We want to go back to the future, back to our roots, back to our traditions to make the connections that should have been made decades ago, and which are now essential if we are going to guarantee a future without want and without war.

(archive ends, unsigned author of the Forward Group, probably Gordon Doctorow)

(Found in 1991)

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the decision of the Government of Ontario to defer implementation of our electoral commitment to public automobile insurance and not to "revisit the issue" during its present term of office was made without sufficient consultation with the membership of the NDP;

AND WHEREAS this decision resulted in severe criticism of the NDP both within the party as well as outside of it;

AND WHEREAS such criticism tends to undermine our credibility on other issues as well, to frustrate the membership of the party and leave the Government open to charges of abandoning its principles;

AND WHEREAS accountability of the leadership to the membership, the adherence of the party to democratically-decided convention policy decisions and to the central planks of our electoral program have always been traditional cornerstones distinguishing the NDP from the old-line parties;

AND WHEREAS it is important to ensure significant membership input into the broad policy decision-making process that the Government is engaged in on key issues of public importance;

AND WHEREAS the party and the Government can only benefit from such increased input, consolidate its support and reaffirm its commitment to principles of accountability:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Provincial Council of the Ontario New Democratic Party set aside an allotted period of time at this Provincial Council meeting to discuss the direction of the Government and ways and means of involving members and suppporters of the party in defending its program.

More than one year after working people elected the NDP to power in Ontario in a dramatic and unexpected move to protect their interests in the then incipient recession, the government is under severe attack, sinking in the polls and drifting without a clear focus. Only a wide-ranging discusssion within all bodies of the party, from the Provincial Council to the ridings, can reassert membership control over the decision-making process within the party and set the government back on course.

The decision of the government to abandon its commitment to public auto insurance--a centrepiece in its election platform during the last three elections--has precipitated the current crisis. The retreat from this commitment was hammered through cabinet and then the parliamentary caucus without consultation with the party rank-and-file. This decision lost the NDP significant credibility with the public and put the Rae government in the awkward position of receiving promises not to criticise it from the Liberals and Tories.

Much of the harm caused by the leadership's flip-flop could have been avoided by broad consultation with party members, many of whom rightly felt betrayed that the same policy that won it such popular support in three other provinces and which big business goverments feared to dismantle, was abandoned by edict from above. Even more astonishing was Bob Rae's assertion that the issue would not be "revisited" during his term of office, an assertion that once again preempted discussion within the party and that went beyond the fondest hopes of Rae's critics.

The Rae leadership's strategy is to assuage the business community whose aggressive attitude has resulted in an advertisement by Ontario's development industry in the New York Times calling for a capital boycott, in industrialist Conrad Black's decision not to expand his empire in Ontario to punish workers for voting for the NDP, in a massive phoney propaganda campaign by the insurance industry against public auto insurance and in demonstrations organized by the Bay Street barons against the NDP's decision to refrain from cutbacks in social services and lay-offs of government employees in its budget.

There was an alternative to surrender before the battle had even began in earnest. The hue and cry over loss of jobs and start-up costs for implementing public auto insurance could have been met with rational and convincing arguments. The money itself needed to implement the scheme was based on cooked-up figures reflecting a worst case scenario involving full and immediate acquisition of all existing companies, inflated severence packages to laid-off insurance executives and entirely unneeded expenditures such as appraisal centres all across the Province. It was never mentioned that the scheme (which involved a cost of only 25 million dolllars in Quebec when it was set up there) could have been implemented in partnership with an existing company and that the funds needed would be acquired by a loan to be amortized over several years secured with a government guarantee at a low interest rate.

Workers threatened with redundancy by the takeover could have been absorbed into public positions opened by attrition. The estimated 750 million dollars in annual premium savings in insurance payments would have itself alone generated thousands of new jobs of a greater benefit to society than positions maintained only as a result of unnecessary duplication and inefficiency. Most tellingly, the insurance industry's bluff could have been called just as it was exposing its hand through the decision of Crown Life to abandon 1,300 jobs in its flight to Saskatchwan (ironically seduced by guarantees of public financial backing from a Tory Government).

The modus operandi of the Rae leadership, its arrogant pre-emption of any input from the membership , its refusal to tolerate criticism from within the government or party, and its tendency to treat the membership as a cheering section, hurt the party, demoralized the membership, left the NDP open to charges of abandoning its principles and whetted rather than satiated the appetite of big business. It is making it more difficult for the party to consolidate its roots, build comfidence and trust among those who voted for the party for the first time as a party of principle accountable to working people, not to speak of those who wanted to stop the insurance ripoffs of drivers by outrageous premiums in the first place.
The retreat on this issue is the culmination of a process that may soon become irreversible. Varity Corporation was allowed to move its headquarters to Buffalo, eliminating key industrial jobs while the NDP "won" a severance payment package. British Gas was allowed to take over Consumers Gas without the option of public ownership, to which the NDP was committed, even being considered. 140 million dollars was pumped into Kapuskasing's main pulp and paper mill against protests from environmentalists and Natives as a US corporation arrogantly extracted concessions from the government. Strict rental controls allowing increases based only on inflation were replaced by a scheme which allows landlords to pass on various costs. Employment equity promises vanished into thin air. Finally, the promise that would have enabled the NDP to pay for many of the commitments in its Agenda for People platform--a minimum tax on corporations, an inheritance tax on estates valur one million dollars and a speculation tax on non-principal residences, have all been shelved--leaving the rich in their privileged position while foodbanks proliferate, homeless shuffle the streets at night and youth face a bleak future.

Instead of acting like it won power, implementing its program and transforming the voters who elected it into committed supporters, the Rae leadership hopes to ride out the recession while acting as a broker between different competing interests. The tripartite mentality that has so far inspired the NDP leadership--the desire to make business and labor work together and compromise--has run into the reality that big business through the federal government is eroding Canada's industrial base in favour of integration into the U.S. economy where benefits of scale and profits abound. Big business, however, has no loyalty to the interests of Canadian working people--only to its profit margins. The recession has created permanent structural changes which have sucked 300,000 jobs--the best paying, unionized positions--out of Ontario to the

U.S.A. The case of Algoma Steel, which provides 80% of the structural steel for the Canadian market, illustrates the dead-end facing brokerage politics. The deal out under the aegis of the government to trade jobs and pay for keeping the company alive will undermine the union, leave thousands of workers unemployed, have a major destabilizing effect on the economic infrastructure of Sault Ste. Marie, reduce the standard of living of the workforce and do nothing to solve the long-term changes that are turning industrial centres into ghost towns.

The task before the NDP is not to show that it is efficient, clever, mature or sophisticated enough to negotiate compromises between opposing social forces or capable of introducing technological innovations and increase workplace efficiency. Rather, it is to show that it can place the public interest above private profit. Ontario remains a rich source of raw resources. The processing of these resources into manufactured products such as auto parts is economically logical. A trained and disciplined workforce presently exists which can do the job. There is an internal market for products suited to Canadian consumers--for cars suited to our environment, for permafrost structures in the far north, for skidoos, insulation and similar products designed for Canadian needs. Our farmers should not have to buy Caterpillar tractors in the United States when the plants which produce them are already here and a ready market exists for them in Ontario. However, the maintenance of our resource extraction and mining industries, the development of manufacturing jobs and the stabilization of a consumer market--all needed to implement a Canada-centered industrial strategy--are the precise targets of the Mulroney offensive. There is only way to protect our resources, maintain our industries, avoid the dispersal of our urban centres and maintain a geographical continuum between regions of production and consumption. An industrial strategy which places the public interest over private profit is sorely needed to resolve our current economic crisis.

Such an industrial strategy based on a democratic determined plan in the interests of society as a whole is absent in the government's plans and projections. Such a strategy would naturally complement the progressive thrust of the Agenda for People which helped elect us to power and ensure our ability to fulfil our programs and promises. It can win back those who are dismissing us as just another opportunist party and who may decide not to bother voting at all in the next elections because of our sorry performance.

Such a plan would have to be implemented under the democratic control of the communities and workers that would be affected by it. Their participation would overcome the isolation and lack of solidarity that workers are experiencing as they see their best jobs disappear and their futures full of uncertainty. The Caterpillar workers who occupied their plant in Mississauga symbolize a combativity that can be effectively harnessed behind such a plan. In the balance sheet which must be drawn at this

point, we must begin to ask ourselves what we plan to leave the people in four years time if we do not give working people control over their lives. The rejection of our counterrts in Sweden in their last election indicates that socialism must mean more than pension plans and welfare schemes. The multiplication of public programs by SAP did nothing to wrest control of the economy from the five major industrialist and financier families that dominate it.

The seige against the government can only be lifted by mobilizing our supporters behind the vision that can win back confidence in the NDP. The lesson of the defeat of the NDP Barrett government in BC in the 1970s was that a party that did not mobilize its own base of support in defence of its program would face inevitable defeat against an aggressive adversary who has seized the initiative. There are alternative options to retreat. Every organ of the NDP has to be open to discuss the best way to defend our government. A full and open discussion would enable those who are most integrated into the different movements and communities in Ontario to have an input into the decisions being made by the government. Only as a result of such a discussion, where all sectors of the party will exchange their experiences and perspectives, can the government reknit its links to the those who elected it. We can regain the confidence of the people of Ontario. We can develop a strategy which can mobilize the members and supporters of our party in defence of the program that elected us. We can retake the initiative seized by the business community in its massive assault launched against the government. The time has come for the NDP to stop acting as if we were still in opposition. We must begin to exercise the power given to us by the people of Ontario. We must begin to govern.

1991: The NDP – A BALANCE SHEET

(Found in the Forward Group–Left Caucus archives – author unknown)

More than one year after working people elected the NDP to power in Ontario in a dramatic and unexpected move to protect their interests in the then incipient recession, the government is under severe attack, sinking in the polls and rifting without a clear focus. Only a wide-ranging discussion within all bodies of the party can reassert membership control over the decision-making process within the party and set the government back on course.

The decision of the government to abandon its commitment to public auto insurance – a centrepiece in its election platform during the last three elections — has precipitated the current crisis. The retreat from this commitment was hammered through cabinet and then the parliamentary caucus without consultation with the party rank-and-file. This decision lost the NDP significant credibility with the public at large, and put the Rae government in the awkward position of being the recipient of promises not to criticise it by the Liberals and Tories.

Much of the harm caused by the leadership's flip-flop could have been avoided by broad consultation with party members, many of whom rightly felt betrayed that the same policy that won it such popular support in three other provinces and which big business governments feared to dismantle, was abandoned by edict from above. Even more astonishing was Bob Rae's assertion that the issue would not be "revisited" during his term of office ・ an assertion that once again preempted discussion within the party and that went beyond the fondest hopes of Rae's critics.

No doubt, the Rae leadership's strategy is to assuage the business community whose aggressive attitude has resulted in an advertisement by Ontario's development industry in the *New York Times* calling for a capital boycott, in industrialist Conrad Black's decision not to expand his empire in Ontario to punish workers for voting for the NDP, in a massive propaganda campaign by the insurance industry against public auto insurance and in demonstrations organized by the Bay Street barons against the NDP's decision to refrain from cutbacks in social services and lay-offs of government employees in its budget.

There was an alternative to surrender before the battle had even began in earnest. The hue and cry over loss, of jobs and start-up costs for implementing public auto insurance could have been met with rational and convincing arguments. The money itself needed to implement the scheme was to be amortized over several years by loans secured with a government guarantee at a low interest rate. Workers threatened with redundancy by the takeover could have been absorbed into public positions opened by attrition. The estimated 750 million dollars in annual premium savings in insurance payments would have itself alone generated thousands of new jobs with a greater benefit to society than positions maintained only as a result of unnecessary duplication and inefficiency. Most tellingly, the insurance industry's bluff could have been called just as it was exposing its

hand through the decision of Crown Life to abandon 1,300 jobs in its flight to Saskatchewan (ironically seduced by guarantees of public financial backing from a Tory Government).

The *modus operandi* of the Rae leadership, its arrogant preemption of any input from the membership, its refusal to tolerate criticism from within the government or party, and its tendency to treat the membership as a cheering section, hurt the party, demoralized the membership, left the NDP open to charges of abandoning its principles and whetted rather than satiated the appetite of big business. It is making it more difficult for the party to consolidate its roots, build confidence and trust among those who voted for the party for the first time as a party of principle accountable to working people, not to speak of those who wanted to stop the insurance ripoffs of drivers by outrageous premiums.

The retreat on this issue is the culmination of a process that may soon become irreversible. Varity Corporation was allowed to move its headquarters to Buffalo, eliminating industrial jobs as the NDP "won" a severance payment package. British Gas was allowed to take over Consumers Gas without the option of public ownership to which the NDP was committed even being considered. Strict rental controls allowing increases based only on inflation were replaced by a scheme which allows landlords to pass on various costs. Employment equity promises vanished into thin air. Finally, the promise that would have enabled the NDP to pay for many of the commitments in its Agenda for People platform – a minimum tax on corporations, an inheritance tax on estates valued over one million dollars and a speculation tax on non-principal residences have all been shelved — leaving the rich in their privileged position while food banks proliferate, homeless shuffle the streets at night and youth face a bleak future.

The Rae leadership hopes to ride out the recession while acting as a broker between different competing interests. The tripartite mentality that has so far inspired the NDP leadership — the desire to make business and labor work together and compromise — has run into the reality that big business through the federal government is eroding Canada's industrial base in favour of integration into the U.S. economy where benefits of scale and profits abound. Big business has no loyalty to the interests of Canadian working people — only to its profit margins.

The recession has created permanent structural changes which have sucked 300,000 jobs — the best paying, unionized positions — out of Ontario to the U.S.A. The case of Algoma Steel, which provides 80% of the structural steel for the Canadian market, illustrates the dead-end facing brokerage politics. The deal worked out under the aegis of the government to trade jobs and pay for keeping the company alive will undermine the union, leave thousands of workers unemployed, have a major destabilizing effect on economic infrastructure of Sault Ste. Marie, reduce the standard of living of the workforce and do nothing to solve the long-term changes that are turning industrial centres into ghost towns.

The task before the NDP is not to show that it is efficient, clever, mature or sophisticated enough to negotiate compromises between opposing social forces or

capable of introducing technological innovations and increase workplace efficiency, but rather to show that it can place the public interest above private profit. Ontario remains a rich source of raw resources. The processing of these resources into manufactured products such as auto parts is economically logical. A trained and disciplined work force presently exists which can do the job. There is even a market for products suited to the Canadian consumer – the production of cars suited for our cold climate, permafrost buildings, skidoos and similar products. It is logical that production of these products should be adjacent to this market. Our farmers should not have to buy Caterpillar tractors in the United States when a ready market exists for them in Ontario. However, the maintenance of our resource extraction and mining industries, the development of manufacturing jobs and the stabilization of a consumer market — all needed to implement a Canada-centered industrial strategy — are the precise targets of the Mulroney offensive. There is only one way to protect our resources, maintain our industries, avoid the dispersal of our urban centres and maintain a geographical continuum between regions of production and consumption. An industrial strategy which places the public interest over private profit is sorely needed to resolve our current economic crisis.

Such an industrial strategy based on planning in the interests of society as a whole is absent in the government's plans and projections. Such a strategy would naturally complement the progressive thrust of the Agenda for People which elected us to power and ensure our ability to fulfill our programs and promises. It can win back those who have lost hope in our government, dismissing us as just another opportunist party.

Such a plan would have to be implemented under the democratic control of the communities and workers that would be affected by it. Their participation would overcome the isolation and lack of solidarity that workers are experiencing as they see their best jobs disappear and their futures full of uncertainty. The Caterpillar workers who occupied their plant in Mississauga symbolize a combativity that can be effectively harnessed behind such a plan. In the balance sheet which must be drawn at this point, we must begin to ask ourselves what we plan to leave the people in four years time if we do not give working people control over their lives. The rejection of our counterparts in Sweden in their last election indicates that socialism must mean more than pension plans and welfare schemes. The multiplication of public programs by SAP *(in Sweden)* did nothing to wrest control of the economy from the five major industrialist and financier families that dominate it.

The seige against the government can only be lifted by mobilizing NDP supporters behind the vision that can win back confidence in the NDP. There are alternative options. Every organ of the NDP has to be open to discuss the best way to defend our government. A full and open discussion would enable those who are most integrated into the different movements and communities in Ontario to have an input into the decisions being made by the government. Only as a result of such a discussion, where all sectors of the party will exchange their experiences and perspectives, can the government reknit its links to the those who elected it. We can regain the confidence of the people of Ontario. We can develop a strategy which can mobilize the members and supporters of our party in

defence of the program that elected us. We can retake the initiative seized by the business community in its massive assault launched against the government. Socialism is no longer merely a desirable goal – it is the only practical solution to the burning issues of our times.

(end)

The Forward Group

November 5, 1991

Dear Comrades:

With this letter, we invite you to participate in a formal meeting of Trotskyist groups who are involved in the NDP. We believe it is an unfortunate situation that several Trotskyist groups are operating in a common work area, like the NDP, and have not yet established some form of discussion on goals and intervention. After all, we revolutionists are precious few in number and are beset with many of the same problems. It seems to us that we have a common duty and mutual responsibility when operating in the same milieu of class struggle politics to create a working relationship.

For instance, the coming ONDP Provincial Council meeting in Toronto this December will discuss and debate the issue of accountability of the NDP leadership and government. This planned discussion is an outcome of the previous Provincial Council meeting in Sudbury, where a rank-and-file challenge emerged against Rae & Company over the issue of dumping public auto insurance. The sentiment for obliging the leadership to abide by Convention decisions is widespread and offers openings for political education. We would like to collaborate in the formulation of proposals and resolutions on what accountability should mean in the NDP.

As materialist dialecticians, we believe that the development of revolutionary cadre and learning of the lessons of class struggle politics need to be done in the context of intervention and collaboration among revolutionary socialist currents. This does not mean that we do not recognize that there are differences in lines and approaches among revolutionaries, but differences should be worked out and understood in the process of fruitful intervention. We are convinced that the process of building a revolutionary vanguard in Canada will be influenced by, and, in turn, will influence the mass political expression of independent working class politics in Canada -- the NDP.

We invite you to send as full a contingent as possible of your comrades to meet with us on one of the following three dates: November 18, 19 or 21, 1991. Both the date and the venue should be mutually agreed upon. We await your reply.

Comradely,

Gord Doctorow and John Glenn
for the Forward Group

Filed
Nov 13 '91

BL 1179

Chairperson Zane

WHAT FUTURE FOR CAPITALISM ?

An in-depth class on current global economic trends

escorted 1230 530

When: **Sunday, April 12th**
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Where: **211 Dunvegan Rd.**
(2 West of Avenue Rd.
7 North of St. Clair.)

Suggested Reading: March 2, 1992 International Viewpoint
Available through the The SC bookroom (924-9069) or
the Forward Group (322-5247)

Donations for food

Refreshments

Cash bar

Full discussion

All Welcome

Sponsored by the Forward Group

(Found in 1992)

Who Governs Ontario?

Stop the Bay Street Business Clowns in their attempt to attack our jobs and services! Oppose the right wing in their movement to dismantle medicare, well-paying jobs, unionized labour, education, women's rights and public auto insurance.

Rally against Big Business

The anti-government spending coalition "People against the NDP Budget" are a right wing organization committed to poverty and exploitation. They would like to reduce the minimum wage, cut public expendature, halt rent controls and impoverish working class people. Ontario's first NDP Budget is a great step forward, though it is clearly not perfect. Thousands still sleep in the street without homes, workers are still losing jobs from free trade and students still face tuition hikes. However, **Bob Rae and Ontario's NDP decided that jobs and services would not suffer in a recession.** Rae reduced Taxes on the poor, increased public expenditure and increased Taxes on the rich. Ontario's government decided that increased spending for social programs is the only alternative in recessionary economic times. Rally against Big Business and ensure that the 1992-93 budget is better for working people.

Rally: Thursday, June 27th, Queens Park 11:30 a.m.

(south-east corner)

organized by Young New Democrats and ONDP LEFT Caucus(Labour Donated)

LEFT CAUCUS NEWSLETTER

Summer 1992 Vol:4 No.1

Left must unite

NDP at Crossroads

By Zane Boyd
Fort York NDP

Clearly we are a party in crisis. We have a crisis in government, in which we are seen as status quo neo-liberals. We have a crisis in leadership, which lacks any real strategy to counter the corporate sector's continentalist, anti-labour, anti-social agenda. And we have a crisis in our membership, which is increasingly demoralized and passive.

The need to build a broad left within the party, to consolidate and put forward a socialist alternative, has never been greater.

We in the NDP Left Caucus don't believe that the current situation is inevitable and hopeless. We don't accept that our hands are tied, that we are doomed to drift to the right. Nor that we are destined ultimately to fail in this historic opportunity as a labour government in Canada's largest and richest province. There is an alternative.

Our party's crisis didn't begin with the current recession. It didn't begin with our caving in to big business pressure and the dogmas of the deficit and the market. Nor with our reneging on long standing reform policies and on the very platform on which we were elected.

Origins of the crisis

The crisis goes back much further, to when our leadership began turning the party more and more into a purely electoral, parliamentary, popularity machine -- depoliticizing the riding associations, and marginalizing the party's base and involvement in the various extraparliamentary popular movements. Membership and fund raising were given over to mail order marketing. Political education, discussion and interest among the membership withered. The outcome is now a totally top-down, executive-run party, trimmed for the sole purpose of running the state store. The leadership has become ever more bureaucratic, paternalistic and patronizing, guided more by a desire to be respectable and to play the gentlemanly, diplomatic parliamentary game than to boldly fight for the program it was founded and elected on.

We need a programmatic alternative to the leadership's lack of one. An anti-capitalist, pro-labour, socialist alternative. We need a leadership prepared to fight for and defend such a program. There is no other solution to the capitalist crisis in this province and country.

A social and political movement

But this alone is not enough. We need to rebuild the party itself as a social and political movement, unified with the trade union and various other popular movements. This is not mere nostalgic sentiment. Such a movement--active, mobilized--is absolutely essential to defending, bolstering and sustaining our government in power and to enabling it to carry out the necessary far-reaching initiatives with broad public support.

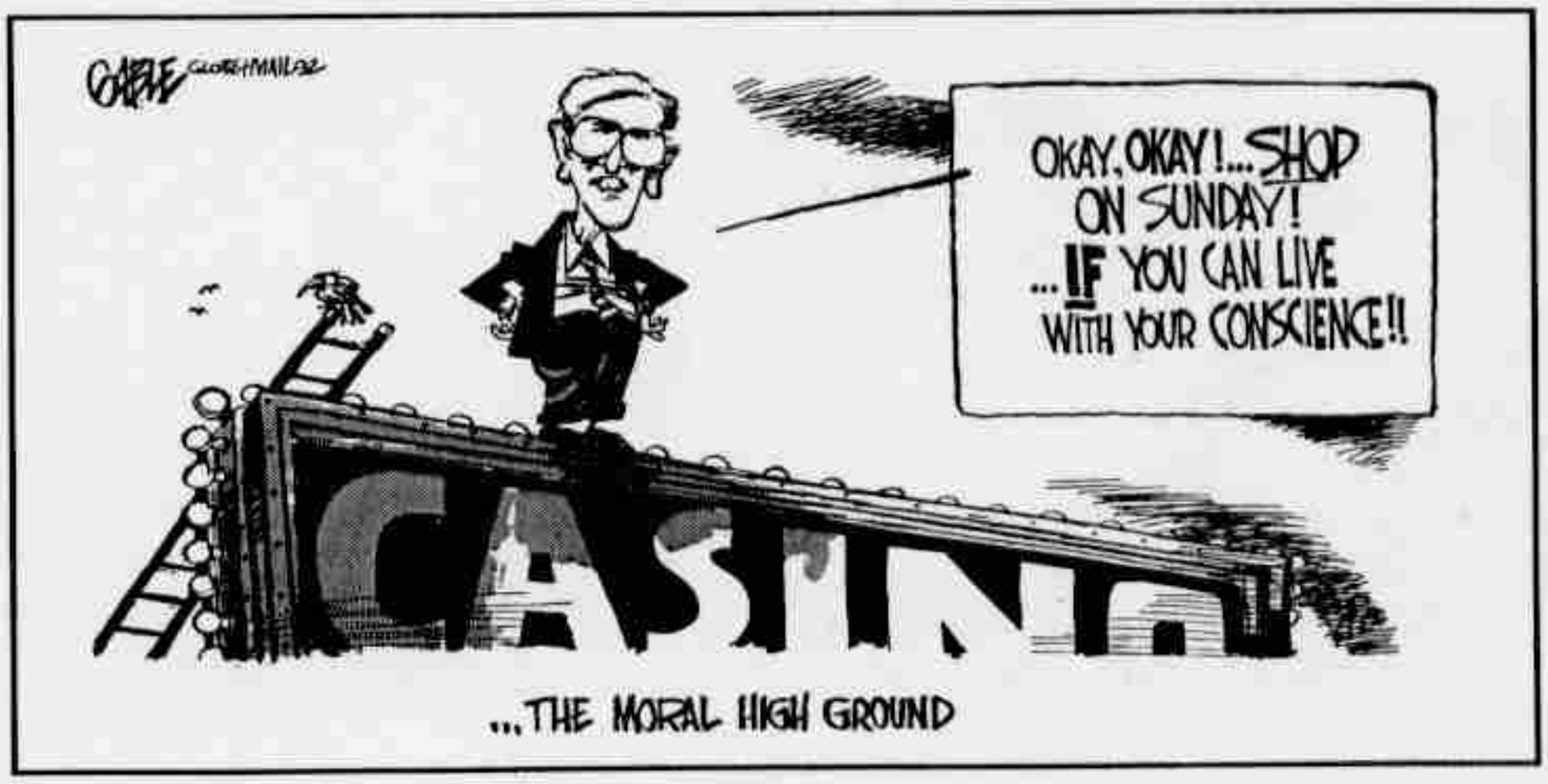
We need to rekindle political activism at the riding level, with NDP-ers engaging themselves in the labour and the various other extraparliamentary social movements that have been its traditional base of support and source of membership. At the same time, we need to bring the ranks of these movements themselves full swing into involvement in the party at every level.

How would such a revitalized, re-activated NDP elected in office respond to the corporate recession, the attacks on jobs, on wages, on social programs, on education and health? How could we then answer Mulroney's reneging on transfer payments?

Activism in power

By placing the government's vast resources at their disposal, we could mobilize together with labour, women, visible minorities, the elderly, students, teachers, tenants, the co-op housing sector, farmers, health care

Broad - page 3



Which way for the NDP:

Casino Socialism or Democratic Planning?

By Harry Kopyto
St Andrew-St. Patrick NDP

Casino socialism or a plan to meet the needs of human beings? That issue has been posed at the June 17-19th convention of the Ontario New Democratic Party by the economic crisis eroding Ontario's industrial base.

Elected in a burst of hopes that a New Democratic Party Government would protect tenants, stop cutbacks in social services, tax the wealthy and protect the interests of working people in a recession, the NDP government has had difficulty on all these matters. We are a party of reform without the ability to make reforms.

The reason for this has nothing to do with whether our leaders are wise or determined or sincere. It is the erosion of our industrial base in Ontario and the consequent unemployment and slow-down of the economy that is behind the difficulties we have had keeping out economic promises.

In good times, with a booming economy, expanding investments and strong purchasing power, many of the reforms that we are committed to could

Democratic - page 2

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again refer the claims to interminable negotiations. No wonder Six Nations elder Arnold General's responded by saying that " Self-government will not come to the Six Nations because we have never lost it. Did we not have self-government when we signed those treaties?" In fact, by making Native laws subject to provincial and federal laws which fall within the "peace, order and good government" clause in the B.N.A. Act, the deal has given the government an opportunity to encroach on the legislative powers of Natives almost at will. Some Native groups have balked at the primacy given provincial laws over their own, anticipating broad resistance in selling the deal to their constituency who know well what racist provincial laws and police can do.

DEFEND FEDERAL SOCIAL PROGRAMS

The proposed constitution will accelerate the dismemberment of English Canada through its proposed superSenate designed to enshrine regional and parochial interests. Senators who need not even be elected will have power to block taxes on natural resources for the benefit of all Canadians. Federal jurisdiction has been ceded to the point where cross-country programs, standards and obligations will be difficult to maintain. 2,000 jobs are expected to disappear in Ottawa because of "the problem we have with the whole devolution of power to the provinces" as NAC President Judy Rebick put it, which would pass on responsibility for housing, forestry, mining, tourism, urban affairs and manpower training (among other areas) to the provinces. Anybody want to place any bets on whether the provinces will maintain existing federal spending priorities in these areas?

The proposal of a covenant to protect social programs contrasts with the social charter endorsed by the federal NDP. The covenant, whatever its wording, will be unenforceable.

The much-touted concessions to Quebec -the distinct society clause and a 25% minimum allocation of seats in the House of Commons--flagrantly ignore the fundamental right of the Quebec nation to determine without compulsion what form of state it wishes to have. Solidarity can only be built on the basis of equal rights and a willingness to associate with the people of Quebec in an economic or monetary union whatever choice they make about their future. Indeed, by committing the government to the "development" of the English community in Quebec in the unity deal, the basis is laid for an attack on Quebec's jurisdiction to protect its own language and culture.

The NDP's traditional position in favour of abolishing the Senate has been cast aside by the NDP premiers in favour of resuscitating the ancient relic as a metamorphasized chamber of superbureaucrats whose selection would make a mockery of proportional representation, as NAC has pointed out, to the detriment of women and minorities. With Alberta's and Newfoundland's premiers opposed to gender equality, the proposed senate means more wealthy male politicians feeding at the public trough. And what measures are proposed to ensure representation of women and minorities in the House of Commons where real legislative power lies? None.

THEIR CANADA OR OURS?

The Mulroney government masquerades in the maple leaf flag while selling Canada out to U.S. corporations through the free trade deals. No one has been more sychophantic to Washington--in the slaughter in Iraq, in U.N. votes on the invasion of Panama and Grenada, in allowing the heights of our economy to be bought up by U.S. capital--than the Conservatives. Yet tragically, the NDP premiers have been manoeuvred into bringing up the rear in the naked emperor's parade. Instead of using their clout to wrest concessions from an unpopular government, the NDP premiers have given Mulroney the progressive cover he needs to bail out his sinking ship, even at the risk

Repression Population

(Found in 1992) re: October

VOTE NO IN MULRONEY REFERENDUM!

On October 26, Canadians will be asked to endorse Mulroney's unity package. After five months of secret haggling and wheeling and dealing reminiscent of the Meech Lake Accord, 12 male politicians emerged from a cloistered meeting room in Ottawa in August to proclaim that they had devised a formula to save Canada from its "enemies". Though a draft of the agreement was only leaked to the media by Quebec Liberal Party nationalist Jean Allaire on August 27, we are already being exhorted to support it as an unalterable compromise or face "enormously serious consequences that will set us all back decades, "according to Bob Rae. A cause for celebration? Or a time for hesitation?

In the unseemly rush to set the deal in concrete (if it's such a great deal, why fear a full debate?) through the federal referendum, not much time is left for reflection. Despite its vagueness and with its final draft yet to be written, the proposed constitution is too important for an evaluation of it, even tentatively, not to be made.

SUPPORT GENDER EQUALITY

We agree with NDP Leader Audrey MacLaughlin that the deal violates women's rights. We agree with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) whose president said that the accord "ignores the right of Canadian women to have gender equality...This package does nothing for Canadian women". We also share NAC's concern on other points as well: the failure to provide enforceable rights for women, Natives and minorities in the Canada clause; the weakening of federal standards by the transfer of labour training programs to the provinces, and the abandonment of new federal programs by opting out provisions for shared cost programs. As NAC vice-president Shelagh Day pointed out, making national programs like medicare subject to provincial priorities will lead to the imposition of user fees since provinces will argue that they have other priorities. Many of these concerns have also been voiced by Nancy Riche, a vice-president of the Canadian Labour Congress. We also share the trepidations of the Ethno-cultural Council, representing 37 national organizations, and the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women, who attacked the deal for ignoring racial equality.

REAL NATIVE SELF-GOVERNMENT NEEDED

The big selling point in this accord for the NDP premiers has been its provision for Native self-government. But many Native groups, including the Native Women's Association of Canada, the Native Association of Alberta and the Mohawk leadership in Oka have taken their distance from the deal.

There is not a word in the accord about how Native self-government will be financed. The settlement of Native land claims is critical to the process. Only four comprehensive settlements have taken place in the last 18 years with 45 still outstanding. There hasn't been a settlement since 1988. The new constitution promises five more years of negotiations, and then the Natives can resort to a hostile court system empowered to once

again refer the claims to interminable negotiations. No wonder Six Nations elder Arnold General's responded by saying that " Self-government will not come to the Six Nations because we have never lost it. Did we not have self-government when we signed those treaties?" In fact, by making Native laws subject to provincial and federal laws which fall within the "peace, order and good government" clause in the B.N.A. Act, the deal has given the government an opportunity to encroach on the legislative powers of Natives almost at will. Some Native groups have balked at the primacy given provincial laws over their own, anticipating broad resistance in selling the deal to their constituency who know well what racist provincial laws and police can do.

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of self-ridicule as in the case of B.C. premier Michael Harcourt. They have put NDP leader Audrey McLaughlin in an untenable position by joining Mulroney's bandwagon with an election in sight. As Labour leader and the head of the NDP's election planning committee, Julie Davis, put it, the political reality is that with three NDP premiers backing the deal, it would be tough for the federal party to oppose it. "I think it would be fairly difficult to stand in opposition... It would create a very difficult dynamic. Canadians would say that if it's good enough for those other folks, then why isn't it good enough for you?" However, Davis's statement that "What we're trying to do is to get people to look at it like a collective agreement, where it doesn't have everything you'd like, but over-all it's not bad and it's enough to move ahead," shows how much the federal party has been backed into a corner. What union would consider it a success to negotiate a clause, like the social covenant, which is unenforceable? And doesn't collective bargaining involve counteroffers and amendments instead of a non-negotiable fait accompli?

McLaughlin's accusations that the NDP premiers failed to speak up for women are regretfully accurate just as their reponse that the battle is being waged quietly behind the doors is naive. The co-option of the premiers could destroy the credibility of the NDP, whose popularity has plummeted from 41% to 16% in the last 18 months, primarily because of Bob Rae's retreats on public auto insurance and Sunday work. And now we are supposed to take Mulroney seriously when he says he wants to save Canada? Save Canada? Sure we want to save Canada..... But--for whom? And--for what?

As socialists in the New Democratic Party, we want a constitution that will create a strong, independent country which will respect the rights of the three major nationalities that co-exist within its borders to freely shape their own destinies. We support an enforceable social charter that will guarantee the right to shelter, employment, medical care and education to all regardless of income. We are prepared to extend cooperation to an independent Quebec if requested. We favour an immediate abrogation of the Indian Act, the transfer of its resources and budget to the Native peoples and the referral of all outstanding land and resource claims not settled within five years to the International Court of Justice in the Hague. We propose, in the new constitution, to endorse Native, Inuit, Dene (and Acadian?) sovereignty over their land, resources, police, laws, health, housing, education, culture and governmental administration.

We favour a constitution that establishes remedial programs and guarantees of sexual equality in all public and private institutions and services and the full integration of all minorities in proportion to their numbers in all such institutions. We support a social charter that not only promises but delivers the right to a job, the right to join unions and the right to collective bargaining. We favour training the physically disabled to make the constitutional recognition of their entitlement to equality in employment real. We favour constitutional prohibition of all forms of discrimination without reasonable cause.

DEFEAT MULRONEY'S UNITY DEAL

The real "enemies" of Canada are those who see its foreign policy made in the White House, its economic policies made on Wall Street and its military policies made in the Pentagon. Whose interests are served by a weak, decentralized Canada? Who benefits from the dismantling of federal programs? Who profits from the subordination of Quebec's workforce and resources to English capital?

The constitutional deal, soon to be peddled by Conservative and Liberal politicians in their crusade to make Canada part of North America Inc. with a U.S.-style Senate, has ensnared the NDP premiers in Mulroney's scheme to dismantle this country while pretending to do the opposite. The history of nations is replete with constitutions full of hollow words but drenched with the blood of those who believed them. Lest its facade be

exposed, the Conservatives want a rushed resolution based on six stage-managed constitutional conferences, bureaucratically controlled parliamentary hearings and five days of horse-trading behind closed doors. What a far cry from the constituent assembly that the NDP called for in the aftermath of the Meech Lake debacle that would enable representatives of trade unions, professional associations, cultural organizations and social movements to create a constitution through an open, democratic, representative process!

There still is time to extricate the NDP premiers from becoming lieutenants in Mulroney's campaign to rebuild his political career by emerging as the saviour of our nationhood. Ultimately, our fortune in the election on the horizon is at stake. How can we expose Mulroney's free trade sellout of Canada's sovereignty while acting as his handmaidens in his crusade for national unity? If Mulroney will deliver the goods, do we really need an NDP government? By saying that "until we get this issue behind us as a country, its going to be much tougher to get the economic issues dealt with," Bob Rae echoes Mulroney's efforts to extort support for his deal. Why should New Democrats make excuses for the failure of the government to create jobs and fight the recession now? On what basis does Rae say that the deal is "not a personal campaign" and should be supported by Ontarians "regardless of their partisan political leanings"? Can anyone doubt that Mulroney will use his leadership role in this "historic" campaign to his own partisan advantage?

FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Let's get back to basics--the principles that were accepted at our Halifax federal convention--a social charter with teeth, self-determination for Quebec and a constituent assembly to allow the Canadian people to forge their own future. Let's affirm our vision of a free and sovereign Canada which can achieve true independence from control by U.S. capital through socialism. Let's vote for a resounding rejection of this deal concocted behind our backs without consultation, without knowing its contents, without amendment and without a full discussion throughout the trade union movement and the NDP as to its merits and demerits. And then, let's launch a call for a constituent assembly that will truly remake this country in the image of its overwhelming majority--the working people of this country whose labours, heritage and future are at stake. There is no other way.

THEN AND NOW (Found in 1992)

The article below is a contribution to an ongoing discussion in the pages of the *Bulletin* on the reconstitution and unification of the forces of the revolutionary left.

The 1960's.

The chief characteristic of the revolutionary left in the 1990's is its organizational weakness. Despite the disintegration of the Stalinist regimes, the triumph of capitalism over socialism has proven premature. In fact, the crisis generated by the "restructuring" of capitalism continues to lay the basis for a rebirth of radical impulses. The weak and fragmented state of the left, however, has meant that no organization has been able to intervene effectively among the growing number of social activists and trade union militants open to a revolutionary alternative.

Is it possible to reconstitute the revolutionary left so that it can intervene effectively in these milieus? If so, how is this to be done?

One has to go back in time 25 years in order to identify a period when the left was in rapid organizational ascendency. Repelled by the limited perspective of most labour parties and disdainful of the equally reformist and blotted heritage of Stalinism, the international youth and student radicalization of the 1960's was attracted to the ideologies of Maoism and Trotskyism in significant numbers throughout the world including Canada. The Maoist currents reflected the impatience of youth looking for a shortcut to revolutionary action. Though initially having adherents and supporters numbering *in the thousands*, especially in Quebec, these groups soon dissipated. However, many serious revolutionists were attracted to the traditions of Trotskyism as well, swelling the forces of the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere from the handful that had survived the 1940's and 1950's to close to 400 members in Canada at the height of the youth radicalization. The Trotskyist movement went through a period of intense rapid growth, playing a leading role in the anti-war, student and feminist movements during the 1960's, giving the youth movement in solidarity with the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere (LSA/LSO), the Young Socialists/Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes (YS/LJS) an influential if not critical weight in the then existing social movements.

direct route

Uneven radicalization

However, outside of France, the working class failed to radicalize during this era. With a decline of the 1968/69 radicalization of the French working class, which at its height saw more than 10 million workers on a general strike for one month, it became clear that the radicalization had a limited, petit- bourgeois character in Canada. Though the NDP became drawn into some of these struggles, such as the anti-war movement, it failed to absorb and integrate the radicalization in an organic manner, eventually cutting off the forces around the Waffle which formed at the intersection of the youth radicalization and the NDP in Ontario. The unevenness of the radicalization, held back by the absence of significant motion in the working class, was so dominant a factor that it even permeated the organized forces of the Fourth International representing world Trotskyism. For example, Ernest Mandel, representing the Fourth International, during a cross-Canada tour during this period, openly attacked the LSA/LSO's orientation to the NDP ("tail-ending social democracy") as well as its position on Canadian nationalism ("supporting bourgeois nationalism"). By the early 1970's, with the mass movements such

actually echoed the line during the tour. "super-ized imperialist"

?

2a Liberation

as the anti-war movement, women's movement and student movement declining, and the working class remaining politically quiescent, thousands of activists retreated from active political activity. A series of fractures and unifications could not succeed in reconstituting the forces around the LSA/LSO which itself eventually dissipated into an irrelevant sect after unsuccessful efforts to unify with ultra-left forces who had become attracted to Trotskyism but who had no sense of its traditions.

Difficult to read

Decline of Canadian Trotskyism

There were other, less significant reasons for the decline of the Trotskyist movement in Canada during this time. Though the LSA formally saw itself as a political tendency involved in educational work, there was a tendency reinforced by the widespread mass actions taking place during that time to see the movement as a "revolutionary vanguard". This created unnecessary harshness in dealing with political opponents and encouraged illusions of a linear path to growth among some younger members.

There were important subjective factors which contributed to the degeneration of the Trotskyist organization in Canada in the 1970's. First and foremost was the thinness of the level of cadres that survived the splits and repressions within the Trotskyist movement in the 1940's and 1950's, reinforced by the intense hostility towards Trotskyism generated by the Stalinists and NDP/labour bureaucrats. Mass expulsions from the NDP and falsification of the positions of Trotskyism were endemic. This had its effect on the movement in many ways. There was a sharpness in the political discussions that took place within the movement which hindered the expression of critical thought and was intimidating to newer members of the movement. There was a tendency to promote persons with organizational skills and loyalty to the movement rather than critically-minded or dissident persons. There was a tendency to intervene in an insensitive way in the various mass movements that we were involved in and the creation of a "campaign" atmosphere through which comrades were encouraged to stand up and be counted rather than play the role of leaders and educators. The internal life of the movement was overly confrontational and the polemical atmosphere which enabled the movement to preserve its positions and survive the splits of the 1940's and 1950's proved counter-productive in the 1960's. There was a tendency to embrace political work in a one-sided, formal and excessive fashion; for example, attempting to promote women members to replace male leaders of the movement in a short period of time in a mechanical, quantitative manner.

Need to discuss this.

26 It is unlikely however that the decline of the movement with the ebb of the radicalization could have been stemmed by any organizational measures. The movement grew rapidly during the 1960's with many recruits brought into membership having the most limited political experience on the basis of formal agreement with the Trotskyist program and a commitment to working in the mass movements. But the Trotskyist movement was in competition with other tendencies during this period and abstentionism in recruiting in the arenas of mass action would have resulted in retreat and decline. It was correct to recruit aggressively and try to educate newer comrades within the movement rather than outside of it or risk having them drift away.

Achievements of the Trotskyist movement

The objective influences which resulted in the decline of the Trotskyist movement and its eventual disintegration in the 1970's were ultimately beyond the control of the movement itself as the difficulties developed incrementally during a period of rapid growth. Nonetheless, the achievements of the LSA/LSO were not inconsiderable. Though many leaders and members of the movement

turned inward into themselves over time, in many instances becoming depoliticized and demoralized during the decline of the radicalization and the fracturing of the movement, there was nonetheless a "combined" character to the historical development of the radicalization of the 1960's. The critical issues of the 1960's radicalization in which the Trotskyist movement played a critical role eventually were adopted by the Canadian working class. It was the building of a mass, independent, anti-Vietnam war movement under Trotskyist leadership in Canada which forced the NDP into its ranks. The Trotskyist movement helped define the key issues in the women's movement at its nascent stage, ensuring a clear focus on the right to choose and the broadest unity in feminist campaigns. The traditions of mass struggle eventually were adopted by the Canadian working class which, for example, held a successful one-day general strike against the Anti-Inflation Board in the 1970's. The labour leadership moved decisively away from the Liberals to the NDP in the aftermath of the 1960's radicalization, thereafter providing a political focus for independent labour political action in accordance with Trotskyist positions. Finally, scores of former members of the Trotskyist movement in the 1960's today occupy key roles in the trade union movement, the women's movement and social movements of various sorts, such as Judy Rebick, for example, having learned to apply lessons learned in the Trotskyist movement in various spheres of society. Finally, there remains a small group which has maintained organizational/political continuity since the dissolution of the LSO/LSA, upholding the traditions of Trotskyism established by Maurice Spector and others since the 1920's in Canada.

i.e. the AW movt

Something we advocated — vs — class collaboration

doubtful "Trotskyist" experience

people influenced by radicaliz'n as a whole to which we Trotskyists contributed

(4)

Lessons for the 1990's

There are many lessons for the 1990's in this experience. Firstly, the validity of the Trotskyist program has been affirmed over the last four decades showing that even a small group can amass a large base during periods of radicalization by intervening with the Transitional Programme. Secondly, there remains a burning need for a cadre-building organization able to develop critically-minded leaders. This has proven to be a *sine qua non*. Without such an organization, it would have been impossible to intervene in the mass movements of the 1960's in order to promulgate the Transitional Programme and win adherents towards the concept of revolutionary socialism.

Well stated

Next, the experience described above, although negative, underlines the importance of the educational role of revolutionary organizations during this era and the importance of rejecting concepts of vanguardism and organizational chauvinism. The utmost flexibility is needed in initiating, creating and maintaining a dialogue among revolutionary groups and individuals in the process of clarifying our political positions.

fed by crisis of leadership in workers' movmt.

Finally, the ultimate fate of any revolutionary formation is determined and shaped by the objective conditions in which it finds itself. The ephemeral, shallow and petit-bourgeois nature of the radicalization and its isolation from the working class were, in the final analysis, the main factor limiting the growth of the Trotskyist movement in the 1960's. During the current era, with a focus for political initiatives shifting to the working class and its organizations, the prospects for revolutionists being able to root themselves into their class and build an association of greater permanence are qualitatively better.

(Notations by Gord Doctorow)

"Then and Now"

(Article, undated, found in 1992 with notations by Gord Doctorow)

The article below is a contribution to an ongoing discussion in the pages of the *Bulletin on the reconstitution and unification of the forces of the revolutionary Left.**

*(*From "Bulletin" -- one issue of which was published by the Forward Group, Toronto, in early 1992, on the Canadian Left, particularly the Trotskyist movement – Web Ed.)*

The I960s

The chief characteristic of the revolutionary left in the 1990s is its organizational weakness. Despite the disintegration of the Stalinist regimes, the triumph of capitalism over socialism has proven premature. In fact, the crisis generated by the "restructuring" of capitalism continues to lay the basis for a rebirth of radical impulses. The weak and fragmented state of the Left, however, has meant that no organization has been able to intervene effectively among the growing number of social activists and trade union militants open to a revolutionary alternative.

Is it possible to reconstitute the revolutionary Left so that it can intervene effectively in these milieus? If so, how is this to be done?

One has to go back in time 25 years in order to identify a period when the Left was in rapid organizational ascendency. Repelled by the limited perspective of most labour parties and disdainful of the equally reformist and blotted heritage of Stalinism, the international youth and student radicalization of the 1960s was attracted to the ideologies of Maoism and Trotskyism in significant numbers throughout the world including Canada. The Maoist currents reflected the impatience of youth looking for a shortcut to revolutionary action. Though initially having adherents and supporters numbering **in the thousands,** especially in Quebec, these groups soon dissipated. However, many serious revolutionists were attracted to the traditions of Trotskyism as well, swelling the forces of the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere (LSA/LSO) from the handful that had survived the 1940s and 1950s to close to 400 members in Canada at the height of the youth radicalization. The Trotskyist movement went through a period of intense rapid growth, playing a leading role in the anti-war, student and feminist movements during the 1960s, giving the youth movement in solidarity with the LSA/LSO, (as well as) the Young Socialists/Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes (YS/LJS) an influential if not critical weight in the then existing social movements.

Uneven radicalization

However, outside of France, the working class failed to radicalize during this era. With a decline of the 1968/69 radicalization of the French working class, which at its height saw more than 10 million workers on a general strike for one month, it became clear 'that the radicalization had a limited, petit-bourgeois character in Canada. Though the NDP became drawn into some of these struggles, such as the anti-war movement, it failed to absorb and integrate the radicalization in an organic manner, eventually cutting off the forces around the *(left-nationalist)* Waffle which formed at the intersection of the youth radicalization and the NDP in Ontario. The unevenness of the radicalization, held back by the absence of significant motion in the working class, was so dominant a factor that it even permeated the organized forces of the Fourth International representing world Trotskyism. For example, Ernest Mandel, representing the Fourth International, during a cross-Canada tour during this period, openly attacked the LSA/LSO's orientation to the NDP ("tail-ending social democracy") as well (attacking) its position on Canadian nationalism (as "supporting bourgeois nationalism") *("although he actually echoed our movement's position during a speaking tour of Canada by describing Canada as 'an imperialized imperialism' " --hand-written note by the author --Web. Ed.)*

By the early 1970s, with the mass movements such as the anti-war movement, women's movements and the student movement declining, and the working class remaining politically quiescent, thousands of activists retreated from active political activity. A series of fractures and unifications could not succeed in reconstituting the forces around the LSA/LSO which itself eventually dissipated into an irrelevant sect after unsuccessful efforts to unify with ultra-left forces who had become attracted to Trotskyism but who had no sense of its traditions.

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There were important subjective factors which contributed to the degeneration of the Trotskyist organization in Canada in the 1970s. First and foremost was the thinness of the level of cadres that survived the splits and repressions within the Trotskyist movement in the 1940s and 1950s, reinforced by the intense hostility towards Trotskyism generated by the Stalinists and NDP labour bureaucrats, Mass expulsions from the NDP and falsification of the positions of Trotskyism were endemic. This had its effect on the movement in many ways. There was a sharpness in the political discussions that took place within the movement which hindered the expression of critical thought and was intimidating to newer members of the movement. There was a tendency to promote persons with organizational skills and loyalty to the movement rather than critically-minded or dissident persons. There was a tendency to intervene in an insensitive way in the various mass movements that we were involved in and the creation of a "campaign" atmospherethrough which comrades were encouraged to stand up and be countedan rather than play the role of leaders and educators. The internal life of the movement was "overly confrontational and the polemical atmosphere which enabled the movement to preserve its positions and survive the splits of the 1940s and 1950s proved counter-productive in the 1960's. There was a tendency to embrace political work in a one-sided, formal and excessive fashion; for example, attempting to promote women members to replace male leaders of the movement in a short period of time in a mechanical, quantitative manner.

It is unlikely however that the decline of the movement with the ebb of the radicalization could have been stemmed by any organizational measures. The movement grew rapidly during the 1960s with many recruits brought into membership having the most limited political experience on the basis of formal agreement with the Trotskyist program and a commitment to working in the mass movements. But the Trotskyist movement was in competition with other tendencies during this period and abstentionism in recruiting in the arenas of mass action would have resulted in retreat and decline. It was correct to recruit aggressively and try to educate newer comrades within the movement rather than outside of it or risk having them drift away.

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The objective influences which resulted in the decline of the Trotskyist movement and its eventual disintegration in the 1970s were ultimately beyond the control of the movement itself as the difficulties developed incrementally during a period of rapid growth. Nonetheless, the achievements of the LSA/LSO were not inconsiderable. Though many leaders and members of the movement turned inward into themselves over time, in many instances becoming depoliticized and demoralized during the decline of the radicalization and the fracturing of the movement, there was nonetheless a "combined" character to the

historical development of the radicalization of the 1960s. The critical issues of the I960s radicalization in which the Trotskyist movement played a critical role eventually were adopted by the Canadian working class. It was the building of a mass, independent, anti-Vietnam war movement under Trotskyist leadership in Canada which forced the NDP into its ranks. The Trotskyist movement helped define the key issues in the women's movement at its nascent stage, ensuring a clear focus on the right to choose and the broadest unity in feminist campaigns. The traditions of mass struggle eventually were adopted by the Canadian working class which, for example, held a successful one-day general strike against the Anti-Inflation Board in the 1970s. The labour leadership moved decisively away from the Liberals to the NDP in the aftermath of the 1960s radicalization, thereafter providing a political focus for independent labour political action in accordance with Trotskyist positions. Finally, scores of former members of the Trotskyist movement in the 1960s today occupy key roles in the trade union movement, the women's movement and social movements of various sorts (...) having learned to apply lessons learned in the Trotskyist movement in various spheres of society. Finally, there remains a small group which has maintained organizational/political continuity since the dissolution of the LSO/LSA, upholding the traditions of Trotskyism established by Maurice Spector and others since the 1920's in Canada *(a reference to the Forward Group, of which the author was a leading member-- Web Ed.)*

Lessons for the 1990s

There are many lessons for the 1990s in this experience. Firstly, the validity of the Trotskyist program has been affirmed over the last four decades showing that even a small group can amass a large base during periods of radicalization by intervening with the "Transitional Programme." Secondly, there remains a burning need for a cadre-building organization able to develop critically-minded leaders. This has proven to be a *sine qua non.* Without such an organization, it would have been impossible to intervene in the mass movements of the 1960s in order to promulgate the *(Trotskyist concept of the)* "Transitional Programme" and win adherents towards the concept of revolutionary socialism.

Next, the experience described above, although negative, underlines the importance of the educational role of revolutionary organizations during this era and the importance of rejecting concepts of vanguardism and organizational chauvinism. The utmost flexibility is needed in initiating, creating and maintaining a dialogue among revolutionary groups and individuals in the process of clarifying our political positions.

Finally, the ultimate fate of any revolutionary formation is determined and shaped by the objective conditions in which it finds itself. The ephemeral, shallow and petit-bourgeois nature of the radicalization and its isolation from the working class were, in the final analysis, the main factor limiting the growth of the Trotskyist movement in the 1960s. During the current era, with a focus for political initiatives shifting to the working class and its organizations, the prospects for revolutionists being able to root themselves into their class and build an association of greater permanence are qualitatively better.

(ends)

The Bulletin of the Forward Group

POST OFFICE BOX 38115, 515 EGLINTON AVENUE WEST, TORONTO. ONTARIO M5N 3A8

November, 1992

Dear Friend:

Enclosed please find a complimentary first issue of *The Bulletin* of the Forward Group. We seek to fill a vacuum created by the absence of an explicitly Marxist publication with a clear, consistent focus on winning the NDP to socialism while seeking to create a united revolutionary leadership in the labour and mass movements at the same time.

We aspire to provide in-depth analyses of the main questions facing the working class in this country with a view to providing programmatic leadership to its struggles.

Take a few moments to read through *The Bulletin*. We think you will agree that no other publication in Canada contains its unique approach and focus.

In order to enable us to maintain our publication, we need your financial support. A contribution of $50.00 or more, payable to *The Bulletin* of the Forward Group, will provide a solid financial footing for our continued publication. It will also enable us to provide you with a four-issue subscription as well as a copy of the pamphlet, *Quebec and the Canada Crisis*.

Some of our future articles will deal with the constitutional crisis and the transitional program, the national question in Quebec, the relevance of the theory of the vanguard party in the Canadian context and other articles focusing on the women's movement, the NDP and the labour movement.

Please fill out the contribution form on the back cover of *The Bulletin*. Remember--your contribution today will help assist in the formation of a broad united Marxist left that can effectively intervene in the mass movements.

In solidarity,

Harvey Katz

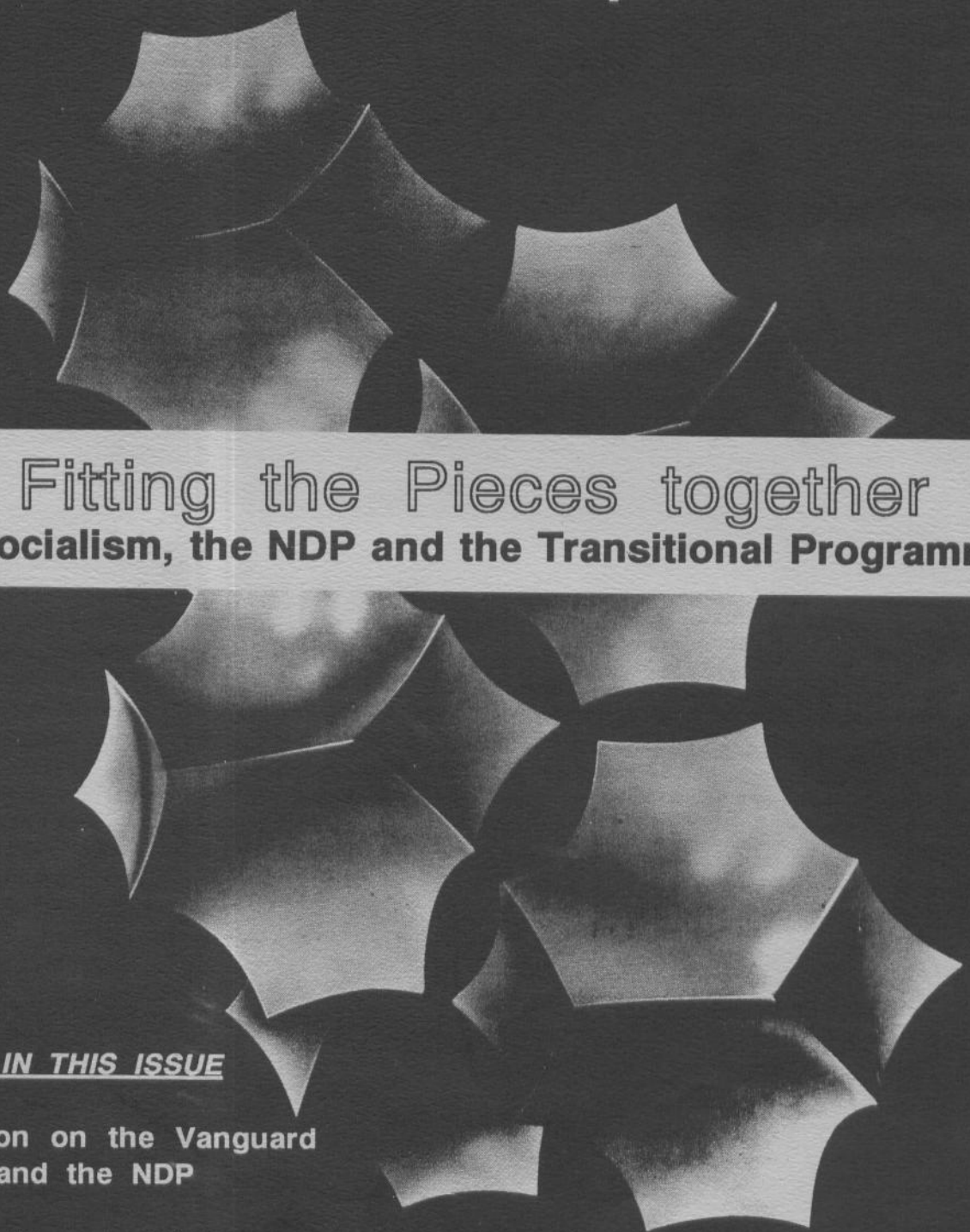
Harvey Katz, Editor

The Bulletin of the Forward Group

The Bulletin

Vol. 1. No. 1 Fall/Winter. 1992 $3.00

of the *Forward Group*



Fitting the Pieces together

Socialism, the NDP and the Transitional Programme

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- Dowson on the Vanguard Party and the NDP
- Opposition to the Constitutional Accord

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The Bulletin of the Forward Group

Vol. 1, No. 1 Fall / Winter, 1992

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The Bulletin of the Forward Group is *published twice yearly by the Forward Publishing Company. Signed articles do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Forward Group. The Forward Group is an association of Marxists who are active in the New Democratic Party and mass movements and sympathize with the Fourth International. Contributions to* The Bulletin, *both financial and written, are welcome and may be mailed to:*

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Statement of the Forward Group:

WHERE WE STAND

The Forward Group stands on the profoundly liberatory ideals of socialist democracy as pioneered in the scientific analysis of Marx and Engels and given living force before the dawn of Stalinism by Lenin and Trotsky. We reject all forms of reformism and parliamentarism which see socialism as an electoral project in which the role of the workingclass is largely limited to casting ballots every few years. Nor do we support the view of purist sects who refuse to immerse their clean hands in the broad and contradictory movements that reflect the current level of political consciousness of working people.

The New Democratic Party, the political voice of the organized labour movement, stands front and centre on the road to socialism. We are critical partisans of the New Democratic Party but without reservations or qualifications--it is *our* party and socialism cannot be built in Canada without the struggle to win the NDP itself to socialism. To the extent that the NDP stands in advance of the workingclass as a whole, posing the need to win labour to power, the NDP is the focus of our politics though not necessarily of our activities. To the extent that the leadership of the NDP harbours profound illusions about the nature of capitalism and promotes a liberal-reformist outlook, the leadership blocks the struggle of workers to overcome the limits of capitalist society itself.

We advance demands that the workingclass can identify with and support at its present level of consciousness yet which impel it into struggles which tilt the balance of forces in favour of the struggle for socialism. This program of strategic reforms and defences of fundamental democratic rights can place the workingclass at the head of the struggles to defend and extend the rights of its allies—people of colour, the disabled, women and the Aboriginal Peoples.

We stand for an independent and socialist Canada free from exploitation as a branch-plant economy and playing a political role as a handmaiden to the interests of U.S. imperialism, currently the purveyors of a new Pax Americana, disguised as a "New World Order". We stand for a Canada that belongs to and is accountable to Canadian workers—a Canada that can only be built through the melding of the struggles for socialism and independence. We therefore support the struggles of Natives and Québécois for independence, of women for liberation and equal rights, of gays and lesbians for complete acceptance and equality, of anti-war activists for a world of peace, of environmentalists for a planet that will ensure the health of all its inhabitants and of the workingclass in all its diversity of age, colour, origin and language for unity and solidarity in the class struggle.

At the same time, we are internationalists to our core. We stand in solidarity with the *Fourth International*, which carries on in the tradition established by the pre-Stalinist revolutionary movement.

In the past, in the Soviet Union, China and other workers states, we campaigned against all forms of Stalinist repression. Today, we equally reject all efforts to attempt to solve the political-economic crises in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union through the restoration of market economies. Against the pro-market ideologies and incipient capitalists, we stand in immediate defence of workers rights and self-organization. Against schemes which will only benefit the bureaucrats and marketeers, increase wage differentials, encourage hoarding and corruption, we support the struggles for workers control, socialist democracy and a political revolution to overthrow the remnants of the national bureaucracies, and transfer power to workers councils in the tradition of Lenin, Trotsky and the early Bolsheviks.

We wholeheartedly support the revolutionary struggles of nations in the "Third World" for true independence, which can only be achieved through socialism. The theory of the permanent revolution has been proven one hundred-fold in the struggles of the inhabitants of the barrios of Latin America, the shanties of South Africa and the hovels of all oppressed people. We stand for the expropriation of imperialist holdings and the annulment of the massive debt owed by the colonized world. We stand inspired by the growing workers movements in Brazil and South Africa which have placed the workingclass at the head of the struggle for independence through socialist democracy.

Finally, in the heartland of the capitalist world, we stand proud as the inheritors of the traditions and lessons of the early pioneers of socialist thought. In Canada, we trace our lineage to the earliest leaders of the revolutionary socialist movement, comrades Maurice Spector and Jack MacDonald, founding members of the Communist Party of Canada who fought against the degeneration of that party under the influence of Stalinism in the 1920s. We stand on the traditions of Malcolm Bruce, Paddy Stanton, Joe Meslin, Ruth and Reg Bullock, Ross Dowson and Pat Schulz, who ensured the continuity of Canadian Trotskyism over the last 50 years in the labour movement and in the CCF-NDP. We will carry on in their tradition until socialism is won.

Why We Are Publishing

This is the first issue of the Bulletin of the Forward Group. Our predecessor publication, *Forward* ceased-publication in the early 1980s. At that time, the world had a different complexion. Solidarity had been repressed in Poland. The movement against apartheid was isolated and weak. Iraq was a client state of the United States. Quebec nationalism had been relegated to the backburner by a defeat in the referendum on sovereignty-association and the NDP seemed a century away from power in Ontario.

Much has changed over the last ten years, most significantly the crumbling of the Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union and east Europe. Welcome as this development has been, it has changed the balance of forces in favour of world capitalism internationally in terms of the new uninhibited freedom given the imperialist war machine. Within the Stalinist states as well, decades of repression and depoliticization as well as the physical crushing of the Trotskyists and other revolutionary forces wiped out the hope that a new leadership might emerge to lead the mass upheavals from 1989 onwards towards a socialist democracy.

In this context, the disintegration of the Stalinist regimes has been widely interpreted as signifying a victory for capitalism. Fundamental questions about "actually existing socialism" and the idea of socialism have become current. Is socialism still viable? Has the collapse of so many "socialist states" given capitalism a new lease on life in terms of future opportunities for investment and exploitation? Is capitalism able to overcome its contradictions in its current efforts at restructuring global markets and conditions of production? In short, is, as the liberals critics claim, Marxism dead?

From left: William Moriarty, Tim Buck, Jack MacDonald and Maurice Spector. The latter two were the earliest leaders of the Canadian Trotskyist movement, expelled from the Communist Party for their opposition to Stalinism.

The Bulletin of the Forward Group has been launched to deal with these and other related questions within the framework of Marxism and Trotskyism. A full and frank exchange of views within the left is needed if it is to renew itself and to overcome its present fragmentation, isolation and weakness. Such a discussion should touch on all the fundamental questions. What should a socialist programme for Canada consist of? What attitude should Canadian Marxists have to the NDP and Canadian nationalism? Is it still necessary and possible to build a "vanguard party" in Canada or in other countries and if so, how can this best be done? What are Marxists' international obligations? Is there still a need for international revolutionary organization and, if so, how can we realize this goal? Such a discussion must take place without ultimatums, preconditions, sectarian attitudes or false efforts at achieving unity without working in common. It must involve all who aspire towards a Marxist critique of Canadian society and the character of Canadian capitalism. Participants in such a discussion must be tolerant of the most diverse views and criticisms. Such a discussion should be all-encompassing and directed towards testing these ideas against current experience.

The Bulletin is designed to reach out to all persons who want to be part of the continuous renewal of Marxism which is a prerequisite for its revitalization. If socialism itself is a subject of criticism, capitalism has not fared much better. How are revolutionists to intervene in the Canadian and international class struggle? How can they obtain a mass audience for their views, to win adherents, to unify and intervene in broad formations such as the New Democratic Party? How are they to rebuild their cadres and how are they to construct the kind of movement that can lead the Canadian working class to socialism? We hope the Bulletin will contribute to this urgent discussion needed to meet these burning challenges of our time.

The Editors

The Transitional programme

Part 1: The NDP in Power in Ontario 1990-92

The first part of this document will deal with the experiences socialist forces have had in applying programmatic positions in Ontario since the NDP came to power in September, 1990. The second part, which will be published in the next issue of The Bulletin, *will deal with Canada's constitutional and political crises and their impact on the formulation of transitional demands.*

By Harvey Katz

What is the Transitional programme?

The Transitional programme is an instrument used by socialist cadres to intervene in movements for social change with a view to unifying and deepening the class struggle dynamics inherent in a situation, raising the consciousness of the working class, making connections between immediate goals and the need to challenge the structures of capitalism, and reinforcing revolutionary leadership. It consists of a set of class struggle demands, including democratic formulations, which strengthen forces in struggle, lead them to partial victories and result in an awareness of the importance of the working class to the defence of such gains. Formulated as the programme of the Fourth International at its founding conference in 1937 and elaborated by the great Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky in a pamphlet that came to be known as *The Transitional Programme*, this programme consists of demands designed to facilitate a mobilization towards political revolution in the Stalinized workers states, for socialism and independence in the colonial world and for socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist states. Though its implementation in totality would mean the eradication of capitalism, it is meant to be applied selectively as appropriate with a focus on one or two key demands.

The Transitional Programme serves to impel the working class to the leadership on all democratic and class issues, melding forces in motion to a programme that will weaken the institutions of capitalism and result in strategic gains leading to a socialist revolution. *No other programme is adequate.* It stands in contra-distinction to the minimalist programme of social democracy and labour reformism, in which socialism is a topic relegated to Sunday picnic speeches, and to the maximalist programme of ultra-leftists and sectarians for whom every partial demand represents a capitulation.

The need for a transitional programme reflects the uneven decay of capitalism. It is a strategy for revolutionary Marxist forces who seek to promulgate their demands whenever there are critical issues posed before a sector of the class. It is designed to propel revolutionary forces into programmatic leadership of active struggles. Because it is formulated to meet the objective needs of workers, the program is always the same whether the revolutionary forces are in the leadership of the struggle or relegated to a lesser role. The program is intrinsically valid though its application is always tactical and adapted to specific situations. It encompasses the contradiction inherent in the phrase "revolutionary reforms". It is not a catalogue of demands but a living program which is continually refined by the relative needs and possibilities of the situation. It bridges the means to the end, the specific to the general, the part to the whole, the subjective to the objective. It seeks to direct specific actually existing struggles on practical questions into confrontations which result in an altered balance of forces, a weakened social system and an awareness by those in struggle of the nature of the capitalist system.

Beyond Reforms

When Lenin wrote about the working class being a thousand steps ahead of the vanguard party, he was referring to the non-linear way in which the working class experiences, digests, generalizes from, interprets and finally develops an understanding of political questions from its daily struggles, which results in unexpected advances. The process itself is invisible though ubiquitous; it is deductive though full of intuition; it is uneven though continuous, cumulative though unpredictable and it eventually surfaces in civil society when least expected with all the force of an earthquake erupting with the pent-up energy of decades of accumulated pressure.

By seeking to advance the needs of the working class, the Transitional Program rests upon the present but simultaneously promotes the future development of consciousness and defines a program which meets

the needs of the majority, whether or not the majority supports it in the instances in which it is raised. Its application generates a consciousness which is uniquely grafted to experience, clarifying the next stage in any confrontation but always injecting into that situation a perspective of implacable and generalized struggle. It supercedes reforms and economist slogans, though it envelopes them. Each transitional demand in its realization strikes a blow at the ruling class, yields concrete gains for workers and raise the struggles onto a higher plateau. It seeks to crystallize the consciousness of those whose experiences impel them beyond reforms.

In the context of the current Canadian situation, the erosion of our economic base to fit the market-oriented restructuring of the most powerful capitalist country in the world has eliminated half-measures, reforms and even the maintenance of the status quo as an effective defence. The Canadian state must either become a direct instrument for continentalization or a tool of Canadian workers against the encroachment of U.S. capital. Each of Canada's four NDP governments is under pressure to abandon its liberal-reformist programs, which cannot be instituted because of the recession, in favor of pro-continentalist measures. Socialist planning has emerged as the unavoidable alternative to the devastation caused by the distortion of our economy in the emerging continental trade bloc.

Similarly, the constitutional crisis has placed Canada's fate as a country on the political agenda of the day. The struggles for self-determination of the Québécois and Native Peoples as well as the creation of political institutions that will best serve the needs of working people and their allies is posed with urgency. The constitutional crisis gives our programmatic formulations a context that intensifies their impact, impregnates them with broad implications and that implicitly raises the question of the nature of the state. The ongoing existence of mobilized sectors of the population such as the women's, gay, disabled and Black movements, enables the transitional program to tap into the streams of social protest which result in a greater inter-relatedness of struggles, a deepening militancy and more opportunities to unite, associate and learn from all sectors of the class.

The first part of this document will deal with the experiences socialist forces have had in applying programmatic positions in Ontario since the NDP came to power in September, 1990. The second part will deal with Canada's constitutional and political crises and their impact on the formulation of transitional demands.

The NDP in Power

The Transitional Program, when labour is in power, has additional unique and distinct features. The possibility of realizing the needs of the working class are omnipresent. Therefore, any demand made upon either public or private institutions directly or indirectly raises the possibility that the leadership of the government and the labour party should themselves facilitate the realization of the demand. Every class and democratic issue potentially requires the government to take a stand. The leadership is challenged to exercise its power as a government — which in times of economic and social pressures from the forces of capitalism it is inclined to abjure — and to mobilize the membership as a movement. A political edge is given to all social and economic issues which they otherwise would not have. A differentiation is initiated between those who wish to accommodate the system and those whose commitment to realize the program is paramount.

Leon Trotsky -- Author of the Transitional Programme

The working class is also challenged to defend the ONDP government from attacks by the right. Such attacks tend to be perceived as an assault on the working class in its entirety, albeit not always directly. The corporate agenda and the offensive against the government evokes defensive responses from working people. The task at hand, ironically, is more often one of trying to compel labour in power to exercise the power that it has (a majority of the seats in the Ontario Legislature) and to defend itself by mobilizing its base rather than to implement any particular measure in any particular form with any particular priority. In Ontario, which is the economically most important province in Canada, where a stagnant economic situation has contributed both to electing the NDP to power and to holding it back from exercising that power, even a simple reformist gesture by the government, such as the 1991 budget, which refused to give in to business pressures for cutbacks and layoffs, can take on a boldness that otherwise it would not have. Actual reforms can evoke a dramatically disproportionate sharpening of the class conflict; viz.,

the Ontario Labour Reform Act. The demands we raise for the NDP to stand firm on become the cutting edge of our transitional program and define our locus in the political continuum facing the class as a whole.

Canadian Workers at Forefront

We experienced in Ontario the ability of the working class to move forward, take chances, explore political alternatives and shed prejudices with the election of the NDP government (with decisive majorities of the industrial working class) two years ago. *This experience has been repeated in two other provinces and one territory, placing the Canadian working class at the forefront of political awareness on the continent.* Within the NDP, which is the crucible for the development of political understanding for the class as a whole, which represents an experiment for the class whose results are not fully predictable and which raises the question of real workers' political power and poses the need for socialism by its very existence, we are witnessing an unusual development. We are seeing the contradictory processes of having a petty-bourgeois bureaucratic leadership wrestling with nominal state power but incapable of instituting its own reform program in a period of capitalism in crisis and rigidity, and the active base of the Party along with its trade union structure, attempting to define and redefine their relationship to each other in a formal political structure.

Leadership Dumps Reform Programme

After the election of the NDP in Ontario in September, 1990, and in order to intervene in the discussions that opened up prior to its 1991 convention, the ONDP Left Caucus organized a policy resolutions conference. Environmental, municipal, women's, Black, Native and youth activists helped devise a series of resolutions that were subsequently debated in the ridings and, in a remarkable number of cases, adopted by the March 1991 ONDP Convention in Toronto. These victories included the acceptance-in-principle of a resolution originating from the conference calling for a province-wide civilian review and investigative board leading to control of the police. This victory reflected the impact of Black activists in the NDP and the willingness of the NDP membership to embrace bold measures in the flush of victory. Similarly, after an extensive debate, the youth and students at the convention succeeded in getting a resolution passed endorsing a freeze on university tuition fee hikes. The mood of the delegates was full of confidence, even exhibiting traces of euphoria. The Party had just taken power for the first time in history. Everything was possible. Rae had a carte blanche. The leadership could do no wrong. People came to cheer the victory of the NDP after decades of campaigning, some with tears in their eyes. A Left Caucus slate candidate in the convention elections for one of three member-at-large positions (who had earlier ominously criticized Premier Bob Rae for telling the media he would not be bound by convention resolutions), received only 12% of the vote.

Yet, within days after the convention, the government, ignoring its convention decision, increased university tuition fees. The Black community is still waiting for the Solicitor-General's Department to end its secret illegal protocol that allows police forces to investigate themselves, let alone to establish the promised representative, independent provincial civilian complaints board. Was the left wrong in supporting these resolutions? Was it sowing futile illusions in the NDP leadership, in reformism, in parliamentarism?

The votes on convention resolutions do not determine policy in reality. The actual political decisions of the government in power are determined by the relationship between contending forces, the willingness of these forces to mobilize and the overall impact of the objective conditions.

What was the response of the membership to the dumping of the NDP's reform program? Was there instant resistance? On the contrary, the response of the trade union and Party membership structures was one of immobility. During the subsequent year, the ongoing capitulation reinforced such passivity. The abandonment of most of the reforms promised during the September 1990 election caused a loss of membership, demoralization, withdrawal, inactivity, cynicism and depoliticization among members and supporters of the Party. Yet, the members of the NDP who saw their resolutions ignored and their high expectations dashed learned a bitter lesson that was not entirely forgotten in the following months or years as the NDP and government leaderships tossed out plank after plank of the bold Agenda for People program. A minority of activists and canvassers did become angry, upset, alarmed and vocal. But overall, the political bureaucracy headed by Rae was on the offensive, taking advantage of state power to extract concessions from the membership that would have been unthinkable in the past, such as opening up the Party to corporate donations, and using soporifics to provide an illusion of accommodation to the Party base while actually ignoring the will of the membership.

Public Automobile Insurance

But then...the public auto insurance issue came along, finally bringing the process to a crescendo. Although it was not possible nor desirable for the left to mobilize a *campaign* to reverse the leadership's decision to dump public auto insurance made last year, the left allied with MPP Peter Kormos and former prominent MPP Mel Swart (aggressive reformers),

who raised this issue in documented form and educated around it at the June, 1992 NDP Convention and elsewhere. The issue of public auto insurance had at its core the question of the integrity of the Party as a party of reform. That is fundamentally why it broke the ground for legitimizing opposition within the NDP, an important development, taking into consideration the attitude that the leadership encouraged to treat anyone who publicly criticized it as a traitor.

The issue was perceived by the membership and the public as undermining the credibility of the NDP in terms of its campaign promises to the public of Ontario. Those who opposed the dropping of this reform (which was the overwhelming majority of the membership) did so as an affirmation of the need to retain a commitment to principles, to fulfill the Party's promises and to hold the line against pressures on the parliamentarist leadership of the Party to adapt to the big business agenda. By identifying with the sentiment against the leadership's retreat, the organized left in the Party touched base with those among the thousands of members and tens of thousands of supporters of the Party who wanted to resist the big business attack on the Party, were willing to distinguish themselves from the government and caucus if necessary and were willing implicitly (though not explicitly, except perhaps on the level of signing a petition) to confront the rightward drift of the leadership.

Bob Rae — Caught between the NDP's labour base and big business interests.

NDP Leadership Retreats

The educational work done on this issue took on an importance which was not diminished by the inability of the broad forces supporting public auto Insurance to overcome the objective defeat that the leadership's betrayal represented for the class. The consequences of this experience were heightened by the transparency of the rip-off of the working class by insurance companies which gave the opposition's intervention a populist, anti-capitalist edge, by the breadth of the issue which affected all persons relying on private transit, by the arrogant manner in which the party leadership dumped an essential part of its platform that was a centerpiece of the NDP's electoral promises for decades, and by the NDP Premier's subsequent gratuitous promise not to "revisit the issue" which exposed the leadership's opportunism as nothing had before. This experience was devastating for a certain sector of the working class base of the Party, including trade union activists, and marked the first retreat of the NDP leadership which evoked generalized opposition within the Party after one year in power. In particular, Mel Swart graphically defended the feasibility of the takeover and exhorted the government to use the issue as a battering ram against the Free Trade Agreement. He posed the need to resist the U.S. corporate onslaught on Ontario's economy, giving his positions a strong anti-capitalist thrust.

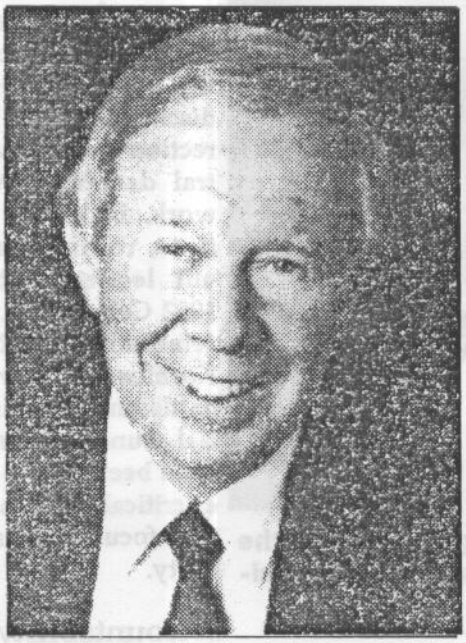
While the NDP government's fait accompli ensured that there would be no successful mobilization to reverse its decision, the left's vocal response insured that the lessons would not be forgotten. The ultimate significance of the issue was the way it paved the way for a discussion on the NDP's overall direction (which was the left's central demand). Without the left's work, including organizing petitions, raising resolutions, putting out leaflets, intervening at the 1992 Convention, consolidating its relations with NDP MPP Peter Kormos and Swart who led the battle and speaking out at provincial council meetings, we would not have been able to zero in on another critical issue that suddenly came into focus—the issue of accountability.

Accountability

The issue of accountability touched on a fundamental question — whom the Party belongs to. It was an issue on which we would both win and lose. The left would win in the sense that we succeeded in opening up a widespread discussion and made key connections. The lack of accountability of the leadership was transparent. The issue itself went beyond a predictable left/right division and the left position melded with popular impulses within the Party in favour of activism, membership involvement, educational discussions, revitalized ridings, the development of critical discussion among the membership and rooting the Party within its activist base. The left would inevitably lose because the leadership was prepared to subtly finesse these impulses while in fact ignoring, limiting, circumscribing and eviscerating the resolutions and proclamations in favour of accountability with impunity, knowing that it would not be challenged frontally and would benefit immeasurably in any real showdown from its aura of governmental power. The leadership knew as well that its chain of

command and control, which was hierarchically structured and bureaucratically maintained, could not easily be shaken. The defining response of the membership of the Party was to accept the apparent concessions of the leadership without a challenge. Though in some extreme cases, members succumbed to reverence for the trappings of political power paraded by Bob Rae, as a rule, there was an absence of self-effacing gratitude. There was a sense that Rae should be given one more chance, to wait and see what happens.

The leadership, which initially was taken aback by the membership's reaction, wisely avoided any direct confrontation on accountability, mendaciously misreported the discussions within the Party in its own house organ, played its "labour bureaucrat card" by calling in support from labour delegates under its influence to win votes at various gatherings and pre-empted the possibilities of a full debate at the 1992 NDP Convention by having Bob Rae intervene in the discussion at a critical point and by making an apparent concession, agreeing to "consult" the membership on policy reversals. This move towards a compromise was in recognition of the unified response of the membership on this issue and marked a progression based on a deepening understanding by both the leadership and the base of their relative positions, and an adjustment in the balance of forces between them and in the manner in which they interact.



Labour Minister Bob Mackenzie criticised Rae for retreating

ONDP Left Caucus Intervenes

The ONDP Left Caucus leaflet on accountability which won approval from riding activists, some of whom reprinted and distributed it, the campaign in favour of the Left Caucus resolution on accountability and the high profile intervention by activists at the October, 1991 Sudbury Provincial Council meeting provided cohesion to the membership's response. The left's intervention enabled it to gain credibility among Party activists, to become known as spokespersons for the rank and file and to provide a comprehensive resolution to fight for. It not only proposed a mechanism for membership approval of government policies but promoted the concept of the Party as a movement that should be harnessed in defence of the Party program, thereby attacking the electoral mentality behind much of the government's adaptation to the corporate agenda. The minor support that was received in the vote in support of the amendment to the accountabilty resolution at the 1992 Convention, which came at a difficult point immediately following Bob Rae's intervention in the discussion, represented the unpreparedness of the overwhelming majority of the activists, left as well as right, from ridings as well as from unions, to confront a leader in power on an issue where he appeared to offer an olive branch. The defeat of the amendment did not detract from the correctness of advancing it. It spoke to the objective needs of the Party's members though the delegates had already bargained away their discretion or were hoping that their goodwill toward the leader would evoke his noblesse oblige. The left stood in a minority knowing that in the future, the goodwill would evaporate, the old bargains would wither and its principled position finally would be vindicated.

The accountability issue arose (as did the public auto insurance issue) in response to the agenda of the leadership rather than as a result of the left's initiative. The political implications of the issue (which directly challenged the leadership's unilateral decision-making power) touched on the need to control the Party hierarchy, the need to build the NDP as an accountable movement, the need to strengthen the membership's role and the need to establish the paramountcy of convention and council meetings.

Sunday Work — A Retreat

The third issue which arose, taking on a significance that not all of us anticipated, was the issue of Sunday work. When the leadership announced its intended retreat from the NDP's anti-Sunday work legislation only six months after legislating it, the opposition was instant. Elected to promote the economic interests of workers, the NDP leaders suddenly were engineering a concession, a retreat from earlier gains, a step back from victories already won, such as double time for Sunday workers. While reactive, the class unity, depth and breadth of the opposition to the reversal, and the axis created on this issue between labour and Party activists, gave the discussion a life of its own which expressed for the first time since the NDP was elected, the refusal of the membership and the labour base of the Party to be taken for granted.

A number of undercurrents were subsumed in the debate, which gave it an impetuous, even an explosive

character. These included an identification with the labour movement, a commitment to the collective ethos involved in protecting a vulnerable element of the working class, a spirit of feminism as women retail workers were disproportionately victimized by Sunday work and spoke out with passionate eloquence on it, an element of nationalist sentiment reflecting a sense that Sunday work was part of a tendency towards a continental work week and finally, a powerful theme of accountability. These impulses found their confluence in this issue, eventually dividing the government, the cabinet, the parliamentary caucus and the Party leadership.

Labour and Rank-and-File Form Axis

This theme of accountability mirrored membership angst with yet another retreat from an electoral position taken by the Party. It evoked a response that was larger than the sum of its parts, a qualitative change resulting from a subliminal perception of repeated betrayal and frustration. The membership's defence of retail workers resulted in the emergence of an alliance with the labour base of the Party, including the Steelworkers Union (USWA), thereby forging an unprecedented strategic unity. Labour Minister Bob MacKenzie publicly challenged Rae's position in a forceful speech at an emergency Provincial Council meeting in May 1992, in a flash of friction between the careerist and labour wings of the Party's leadership. The peripheral nature of this issue in relation to issues such as unemployment, the economic crisis and government cutbacks facilitated its role as a lightning rod attracting the concern about the drift of the Party on *all* issues. Though the challenge to the Party establishment by the membership was cohesive, unified, militant and enthusiastic, the largely symbolic significance of the issue meant that the membership did not lose face when Rae refused to abide by the Party's sentiments. The mobilization largely dissipated, (albeit in anger), and the challenge faded in a manipulated compromise manoeuvre which the Rae leadership implemented at the June 1992 Convention, though with many members retaining a residual experience and remembrance of the experience.

Hold the Line on Labour Reforms

The next issue that the left forces addressed at provincial council meetings, in leaflets and at the 1992 Convention involved the *Labour Relations Act* reforms. On this point, the labour movement and the Party rank and file took the initiative and did not merely respond to the leadership's agenda. The Left Caucus contributed to the attention given this issue by making it the theme of its intervention in the 1992 Convention to the point where Bob Rae mentioned the proposed reforms as the first point for emphasis (and applause) in his Convention "acceptance speech".

The labour reforms had been put on the agenda by the working class of Ontario to redress the balance of economic forces more in favour of the working class; i.e., as political action to reinforce the economic struggles of workers. The left's call for activating the Party in extraparliamentary activities in defence of these reforms found a responsive echo both within the labour base of the Party as well as among riding activists. The issue has been given central importance because of the assault from the right on the government and because of the benefits of anti-scab legislation to the labour movement. A retreat on this issue would create a crisis in the Party, an open split with the labour base and would open possibilities for a trade union-oriented and socialist challenge to the NDP leadership.

Will Labour Take the Initiative?

The Rae leadership has no perspective of energizing the membership on this issue other than to channel the enthusiasm of the activists into a campaign to bolster membership, raise funds and to deliver a questionnaire on the issue to residents of the province. The Ontario Federation of Labour, while passing resolutions at its own 1991 convention attacking the NDP's jettisoning of almost half of the original reforms package, is relying on its influence within the NDP to keep the Party on track. What if the reforms are stymied by a filibuster or some parliamentary manouevre? Will the labour movement begin to take initiatives on the issue through its own forces inside or outside the NDP? Recently elected Canadian Labour of Congress President Bob White has been critical about "disappointments" like the NDP's stand on auto insurance and the 1992 NDP budget. While seeking to expand the labour movement's commitment to the NDP, he has stated that "We're an independent labour move-

CLC President, Bob White says ONDP "is not moving as fast as we would like" on reforms to the Labour Relations Act.

ment and we have to retain the right of criticism." Recognizing that "the labour movement is a social action group on its own," he has nonetheless limited his criticism of the ONDP on the labour reforms issue to suggesting that the ONDP "is not moving as fast as we would like." It is obvious, however, that the CLC would take independent action on the issue if the ONDP wavers in its commitment, despite White's concern that the CLC "has to be a little bit careful of intervening directly in a provincial matter". If, however, the labour movement takes to the streets, the possibility will exist to educate and raise the level of combativity of members of the Party. The left's emphasis continues to be on the importance of extra-parliamentary action to defend the reforms and counter the demonstrations and multi-million dollar campaign of the right. This helps to overcome the pressure isolating the ONDP leadership and causing it to buckle.

Plant closures pose the need for economic planning under workers' control.

Casino Socialism

The context of economic crisis induced by the intensification of international competition for markets caused the left to emphasize democratic planning within the ONDP in the past two years. The need for a democratic socialist plan has been made apparent by the bankruptcy of the ONDP leadership which has succumbed to the sad mentality of "casino socialism". Though raised prominently in the literature that the left distributed, the possibilities of developing the themes of socialist planning and workers' self-management in depth on other occasions have been limited by the truncated nature of convention discussions, by the near absence of educational activities at the riding level, by the ability of the leadership to limit policy discussions at council meetings, by the weakness of the organized left in the NDP as well as by the failure of labour to pose an alternative.

Tripartism is Dead End

Moreover, the economic conditions have put the working class in Ontario and in Canada on the defensive (at least at this stage). Loss of employment, erosion of our standard of living, insecurity and debilitating poverty have given credence to a turn away from fundamental reforms. Such reforms and the creation of new public enterprises are pictured as extravagant divergences during a severe recession. The NDP leadership has justified cutbacks and dismissals on the basis of the unavailability of public funds. It has worked to an extent. It has become difficult to campaign for public ownership of steel companies or natural resource companies or airplane companies or insurance companies in isolation, *seriatim*, instance by instance, where the merits of our general arguments sink into a morass of alternative priorities, competing interests, pragmatic problems, timing considerations and marketability issues. Yet the need for socialist measures has never been posed more. The lessons are there all to be learned. The permeation of a tripartite approach by the NDP leadership and in key sectors of the labour movement has meant that the government sees its role as a neutral arbitrator in an uneasy partnership between labour and capital. The government's policies have been concentrated on damage control, on severance packages for Caterpillar employees, on compromises with Algoma Steel, on accommodating General Motors and DeHavilland, on seeking to attract investment capital by minimizing the overhead cost of production for private industry at the expense of raising the public costs of maintaining, educating, training, healing and feeding the workforce. Rae's recent acceptance of the inevitability of free trade following his May 1992 trip to Japan has fueled his strategy to develop a competitive technological sector in Ontario, ignoring the fact that the marketplace is at overcapacity already and that one or two transnationals have the ability to supply the entire global market in many critical sectors of the economy.

Hi-Tech Dream is Utopia

However, with U.S. industries swallowing up massive quantities of Canadian research, development, technical and skilled jobs, the ONDP government, with its utopian dream of developing a high tech industry that would be able to compete globally, assumes the unflattering image of King Canute, urging back the inevitable roll of the tide. These actions, policies and positions express the contradictions between the objective position of the NDP as a labour

government able to shift the relationship of forces in favour of workers while at the same time confronted with an aggressive offensive by corporate power.

We could have submitted and fought for a resolution for public ownership of a major industrial concern at any number of Party meetings but we would have been isolated, without support from the labour movement, unable to develop a discussion where our case could effectively be made and unable to fully motivate, defend, explain and campaign around the issue. The impulses at the base of the NDP are being expressed at a level which offers the least resistance on issues which defend the most fundamental aspects of the Party. This is not to say that there is no palpable despair and revulsion with the absence of programmatic clarity that has led the NDP to a casino-mentality approach to the economy. Many members are willing to accept an alternative approach, though the will to fight the leadership at present on any specific measure is lacking. It is therefore an appropriate time to do educational work rather than confront the leadership over a specific economic decision.

For Democratic Socialist Planning

The concept of a democratic socialist plan raises all the economic issues to a higher level without succumbing to pragmatic questions of affordability or prioritization. It projects both an alternative vision and the means to attain that vision. Democratic planning raises issues of structure explicitly and ownership implicitly. Democratic planning projects an image of a reshaped social system where social and environmental and human needs rather than profitability become the criteria for economic decisions. If a reform party cannot implement reforms, then the alternatives are either socialist planning or hopeless efforts to stabilize a chaotic capitalist system suffering the convulsions of a new international trade war. The "deindustrialization" of Canada does not permit a third alternative.

The distortion of our economy by the impact of "free trade" exposes the chaos of capitalism in a vivid form. Democratic planning with all its associations and implications, is the only solution. While *some* plant shutdowns pose public ownership, *all* plant shutdowns pose the need for an economic plan. The left was right to emphasize such a global vision of democratic planning in the educational way it did in almost all its leaflets over the past two years, rather than be sidelined into campaigning against the government for not nationalizing Consumers Gas or Algoma Steel.

The left did produce a number of resolutions in the 1992 pre-convention discussions connecting the crisis of over-production to specific solutions. For example, the left proposed distribution of surplus agricultural produce at cost through government outlets to replace the proliferation of foodbanks. The most popular entry in the Resolution Book was one written by the Left Caucus satirizing "casino socialism." The leadership wisely avoided a debate on the issue.

Left Intervenes Programmatically

Over the last year, there has been a progression inherent in the application of the left's programmatic interventions around various issues. Its intervention has progressed from an issue that affects members of the NDP as election workers (public auto insurance), to an issue that affects NDP members as members of a political party (accountability), and then to an issue that affects NDP members as a social movement (Sunday work), and then to an issue that affects NDP members as partisans of the labour movement (the *Labour Relations Act* reforms), and finally to an issue that affects the NDP membership as partisans of an alternative economic vision (democratic planning). At the same time, an element of the membership moved from silent timidity to vocal opposition to unified protest to a state where there is a potential for an activist campaign in conjunction with the labour movement.

We have seen an element of the class deepen its consciousness, develop an understanding of how labour in power should deal with capitalism in crisis and enter a state of willingness to engage in combativity. With this perspective, the Left Caucus entered the June 1992 Convention of the ONDP realizing that the leadership had exhorted government employees to stand as delegates and had cut a deal with the labour leadership to avoid frontal challenges, but nonetheless determined to campaign on its program as described in this article.

All Key Questions Posed

It did not seek to develop a more "revolutionary" program. The auto insurance issue posed public ownership of massive financial institutions and would have wrested a major industry from the capitalist sphere if it was attained. The demands for accountability and activated ridings to stand behind the program would have placed the leadership under control of the membership, creating a crisis for the hierarchy and made membership structures centres for the exposition, development and implementation of radical policy. It would have transformed the NDP into a democratic movement under membership control bound to implement its program as well as making the government fully accountable to the Party instead of to an entity described by Rae as "all the people". The Sunday work issue posed the need for class solidarity with retail workers, with women, with vulnerable elements of the class and social policies reflecting the collective needs of Canadian workers against U.S. capital's pressure for a continental work week. The labour re-

Gambling with workers' hopes. Rae's legalization of casinos shows dead-end of reformism during period of capitalist decline.

forms underlined the class nature of the NDP as a party of the labour movement and the need to transform the NDP into a party of militant struggle. And democratic socialist planning posed the need for workers self-management and social priorities — the only answer to the chaos of global restructuring. Who does the Party belong to? Who should the Party serve? How should the Party realize its goals? All these questions were posed by these issues.

Who Sould Lead the Party?

One question however remained to be posed: who should lead the Party? Despite the membership's defensiveness and the blatant manipulation of convention discussions by the Party establishment, the left succeeded in running a slate of five persons (more than at anytime since the 1970s) for Party positions, electing a Left Caucus slate member (who was also endorsed by the leadership as a concession to the Black community within the Party) to the position of member-at-large, obtaining 28% of the vote for one of three vice-presidential positions and dramatically posing the need for an alternative direction both in floor interventions as well as through thousands of copies of items of literature distributed at the convention. These efforts tapped into the sentiments that the left had campaigned around for two years, winning the support of many of the Party's members and activists on these issues. It was a bold initiative which yielded significant results in a difficult context where few saw any real perspective to carry the struggle forward against an entrenched and bureaucratic leadership bathed in the aura of state power.

The left was able to draw attention to a few demands which articulated the desires and hopes of the class in its inchoate and developing form. It won support from a significant grouping of activists on the public auto insurance issue. It also won support from advocates of a ban on Sunday work, many of whom indicated that its stand on this issue won them over, from trade union militants and mavericks who wanted to send Rae a message to make sure the labour reforms were enacted, from riding activists concerned about accountability and from delegates who wished to articulate their abhorrence of casino socialism and their support for democratic planning, from students and Black delegates who remembered the leadership's betrayal of the March 1991 Toronto Convention resolutions (and who retained, at least in the latter case) their presence as a cohesive force in the Party.

Some Revolutionists Abstain

Yet, some critical reflections are in order. The left's weakness in the Party can be understood in part because of the absorption of many activists into the Party's and government's apparatus. It can also be understood by the inexperience and lack of understanding and confidence of many new members attracted to the Party only recently. More disturbing, however, is the abstention of most revolutionary socialists from this milieu of struggle. To the latter, we say that a defeat for the NDP is a defeat for the working class and leads not to a deeper understanding, but to cynicism and despair. The NDP stands in advance of the class as a whole and reflects the present understanding of the politicised elements of that class. There is no significant force to the left of the NDP that can address the needs and concerns of Canadian workers. Its contradictions are the contradictions of the class. The duty of revolutionists is to be with their class, to go through the unfolding experiences, learn with them and help organize and participate in their discussions. There is no shortcut.

For those forces who fought this battle in the NDP over the last two years, it was a worthwhile engagement. It was a serious testing of the left's programmatic perspicuity. The theory of the Transitional Program and its concrete application in the context of the NDP in power in Ontario has contributed to our socialist theory and practice in the context of a living political experiment. ⊕

The Vanguard Party and the NDP

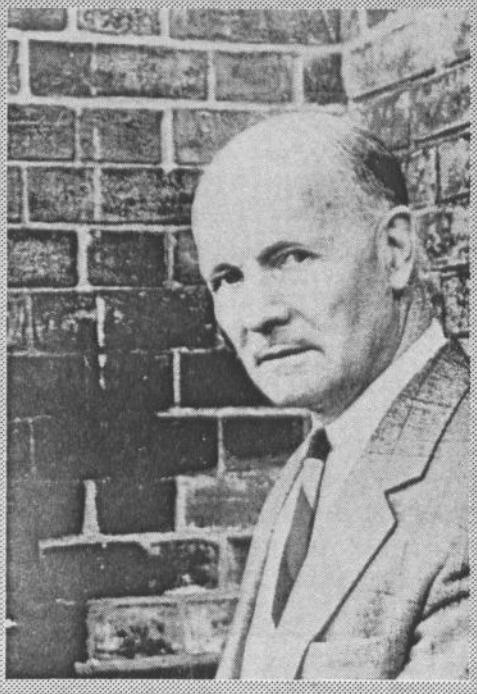
By Ross Dowson

INTRODUCTION:

For virtually this entire century, revolutionary Marxists have been faced with the unfortunate but inescapable fact that the labour and socialist movement the world over has been dominated by reformist parties and leadership.

Expressed in theory most explicitly by the German Social- Democratic leader Eduard Bernstein, reformism took hold in practically all the parties within the Second International in the form of parliamentary opportunism and gradualism, culminating most emphatically with their capitulation to the national chauvinism of the capitalist First World War.

In the years following the War and the victorious Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the revolutionary current in the international workers movement set out to construct new Marxist parties and a new, Third International. From their earliest days, however, the young Communist parties of Europe and North America, although they then numbered in the thousands or tens of thousands, were confronted by the fact that the reformist Social-Democratic parties still held sway over a large majority of workers. This began a debate within individual Communist parties and the Third International itself over tactics and strategy vis-à-vis the reformist workers parties.



Ross Dowson, author of this document, has been a leading member of the Trotskyist movement since the late 1930s and the leader of the Canadian section of the Fourth Internatinal for several decades. He is regarded as the leading exponent of the Trotskyist orientation to the NDP. Debilitated by a stroke in 1989,Comrade Dowson currently resides in Toronto

It was this debate which Lenin addressed in his famous pamphlet Left-Wing Communism--An Infantile Disorder in 1920. Among other questions (Do Communists work in "reactionary" reformist-led trade unions? Do they participate in bourgeois elections? Do they try to get elected to parliament? etc.), Lenin discussed at considerable length the matter of whether revolutionaries should support the larger reformist workers parties against the capitalist parties during bourgeois elections, he himself favouring such tactical support. As for the related issued of whether revolutionaries (specifically British Third Internationalists split among three groups) should actually affiliate to and work within a large reformist party such as the British Labour Party, Lenin left this question unanswered, due to his lack of more specific information on the British situation, but he remained open to this tactical approach and urged British Communists to do likewise.

These tactical debates continued to persist within the early Communist parties, including here in Canada where the small, illegal Communist Party formed in 1921 faced the newly established, Canadian Labour Party.

These issues became more, not less, critical for revolutionary Communists around the world with the Stalinization of the Third International, the expulsion of Trotskyists and other revolutionists from

the Communist movement in the late 1920s and the 1930s, and the capitulation to reformism both in theory and practice beginning in the 1920s (China) and from the 1930s on in the form of Popular Frontism and the U.S., support for the Democratic Party. Revolutionary Marxists, who now found themselves for the most part outside both the Social-Democratic and the Communist parties, were even smaller in number, even more isolated ideologically, and had even less direct influence among the working class than the early Communist parties themselves 10 and 15 years earlier.

The debate over tactics and strategy vis-à-vis the reformist-led workers movement lingered throughout the 1930s, and has persisted to one degree or another ever since, not only within the various Trotskyist organizations and the Fourth International, but among all revolutionary groupings and among individual Marxists as well in virtually every country. Canada has proven no exception. From the 1930s to the 1960s to the 1990s, the issue of how to orient to Canada's labour party has been critical to the political effectiveness and influence of not only Canadian Trotskyists but all left currents as well as individual Marxist trade unionists and academics.

The following document was written in 1970 by Ross Dowson and entitled at the time "Our Orientation to the NDP — as a strategy — and its tactical application". In both, he projects an orientation and at the same time outlines the history of its development and application over some three decades of experience both in the NDP, and in its precursor, the CCF, by the Canadian Trotskyist movement.

At the time of writing, it was the unanimously agreed upon viewpoint of the Canadian Trotskyists. It was presented in the name of the Political Committee of the League for Socialist Action/La Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière and adopted without dissent by its 1970 convention. It was not put to a formal vote solely for reason of the fact that, while it stood on the diverse work of the past and pulled it all together, it also contained considerable interpretation of history with which the quite youthful delegates could not be familiar.

In the following years, with the ebb of the youth radicalization and its backlash on the LSA/LSO, which had as yet few substantial roots in the working class and which this orientation was designed to overcome, the LSA/LSO was shoved off its base and suffered a series of splits which in turn led to more splits.

As testimony to its living significance, the document that follows has become one of, if not the chief, centre of contention as ultraleft pressures hit the Trotskyist movement, splintering almost the entire leadership that it had pulled together. Of all the various groups it is the Forward Group that has continued to stand on this document. We publish it not only because of its timeliness but in anticipation that it will help overcome the present fragmentation in the left and get a united Trotskyist movement back on the correct path, making it the decisive factor in the continuing radicalization and its political expression, the NDP.

- Z.B.

The revolution that is coming — that will place the working women and men of this country in full command over its vast resources, that will link it to the worldwide struggle of the working class, and lay down the foundations of the new socialist order of peace and freedom — requires a party as its organizer and director.

That party must be built along the lines of a revolutionary vanguard. Not an elitist formation of self-appointed saviors, but a party of working women and men completely dedicated to the struggle of the workers, a party of leaders of the class — a combat party armed with a revolutionary program.

No other type of party will do. History has already recorded that without such a party the revolution in an advanced capitalist country such as Canada is an idle dream.

From Words to Deeds

But to proclaim the need for such a party — to repeat it endlessly as some do — and to actually move effectively in the direction of building such a party are two totally different things.

Those forces that have already grasped the essential outlines of this idea are confronted with a working class movement which has already taken on a structured form.

These forms have a tremendous resilience because, however inadequate, they now serve the class's interests — even when they no longer do so they remain a

(SEE W4-Labor Party Series-1970: "Socialist Vanguard & the NDP"-full text) (-ed.)

JOE MESLIN: 1914-1989

It is now three years since Comrade Joe Meslin passed away. Although there was a large attendance at his funeral and at the subsequent Workmen's Circle memorial, his death was not mentioned in any of the journals of the official Trotskyist movement. With the launching of the *Forward Bulletin*, we now reprint an obituary note written at that time for submission to the official organs of the Fourth International.

This note is written to commemorate the tragic passing of a lifelong Canadian Trotskyist. Joe Meslin died of a heart attack early Saturday, November 25, 1989 in Toronto at the age of 75. He was a loyal supporter of the Fourth International and a pioneer of the early Trotskyist movement.

Joe was born in Novograd, Ukraine on March 21, 1914. His family emigrated to Canada when he was still a young boy. He grew up in the Jewish radical milieu. He had been a member of the Communist youth movement in Toronto, where he met Maurice Spector and Jack MacDonald, two of the giants of North American Trotskyism. Like Spector and MacDonald, he was excluded from the Stalinized CP. Joe often spoke of the events of the time: the speeches and rallies that Spector and MacDonald led, the strikes, the anti-fascist mobilizations, and the workers' movement. And Joe devoted himself to playing a role in the workers' movement. He would often recall the words of Trotskyist militant unionist Paddy Stanton who said that revolutionists had to be prepared to get their hands dirty – meaning they had to participate in the union organizations.

Eventually, Joe became a union organizer. Before his retirement, he had served as business agent of the Hatters, Millinery, and Cap Makers Union and he was the organizer and founder of the Optical Union in Toronto. He fought for the rights of immigrant workers and for union solidarity. He was a skillful and adroit leader who was always in close touch with the membership, and he always exhibited the depth and breadth of a person who centred his whole life around the construction of a socialist society.

Joe found great satisfaction in the work of the Fourth International and followed its journals and analyses, particularly in regard to the post-capitalist states. He was a member of the Workmen's Circle and often spoke at their meetings carrying forward the positions of Trotskyism especially in regard to the Jewish Question and Zionism. Always a conscious supporter of organized Trotskyism, he brought around many contacts that he met in his various activities to the Trotskyist movement, with which he never ceased to identify or support.

Despite many tragic events in his life, Joe maintained his sense of revolutionary commitment. His first wife, a revolutionary socialist, had died of cancer, and so did their daughter. Joe leaves behind him three children and his second wife, Lena. His family, friends and comrades will sorely miss him as a source of good humor, inspiration and socialist integrity.

BILL CLINTON: 1963-1991

Bill Clinton, a committed revolutionary, a comrade and a good friend died in his Scarborough apartment on July 9 of last year.

In 1985 he joined the Forward Group where, under the guidance of Ross Dowson, he honed his political ideas in the hopes of advancing the position of the working class, of which he was proud to be a member. As many of us were well aware, he was strongly adamant about his views, but no matter how heated a discussion would become, he would eventually reconcile in the spirit of friendship and common cause. Although, leaving the group in 1990 after some disagreements, he remained politically active and towards the end of his life, indicated his intention to re-enter the movement. His extensive knowledge of world events and his ability to retain some of the most obscure facts made him an invaluable resource. He would often take time out to hop on the subway to lend a comrade a book or an article, or just to share a scotch and some laughs.

An avid student of jazz, literature, philosophy and politics, Bill found his calling in working with young people who found themselves on the wrong side of the tracks and, often, the wrong side of the law. His humanitarianism led him into criminology, a field in which he worked, not to condemn, but to do everything in his power to restore these people's self-respect — a task that often put him at odds with his bosses. It was this profound sensitivity that, however suppressed, marked not only his life but also his death. He looked on in despair as working class gains seemed to fall to worldwide capitalism on a daily basis, both at home and abroad. This, coupled with complications in his personal and work life, is what led to this tragedy.

His respect for friends and strangers alike was ardent, as was his hatred for social injustice. His commitment to Marxism-Leninism and to his friends will be missed by those who have had a chance to work with and know him.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

Canadian Trotskyist Archives Established

The Canadian Trotskyist movement has had a rich and influential impact on large numbers of people active in the socialist and mass movements. Its origins go back to two key founders of the Communist Party, Maurice Spector and Jack MacDonald. The Trotskyist movement played an important role up to and at the founding convention of the CCF in 1932 as well as at the founding convention of the NDP in 1961. Trotskyists were prominent in the united front activities of socialist groups in the 1930's, helped to organize the unemployed during the Depression, and stood in the forefront of the labour upsurge in the post World War II period. Canadian Trotskyists organized the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, were leading activists in the Ban the Bomb movement, initiated and led the united front against Canada's complicity and for withdrawal of U.S. imperialist troops from Vietnam in coordination with the world antiwar movement. Trotskyists were on the front lines of the student power movement, solidarity with the U.S. Black civil rights movement, pro-choice movement, women's liberation movement, environmental movements, Latin American solidarity campaigns, African liberation movements and played a critical role in the development of the movements for self-determination in Quebec. Trotskyists figured prominently among the victims of the War Measures Act of 1970. And members of the Trotskyist movement organized a sustained legal campaign to expose the crimes of the RCMP Security Service against the left and the labour movement, contributing to the Security Service's dissolution.

Through these activities, Canadian Trotskyists pioneered new theoretical insights into the developing struggles: on Québec nationalism, on the relationship of the theory of Permanent Revolution to the Native and Black questions, on the origins and nature of Canadian nationalism and Canada-U.S. relations within a Marxist framework, on the significance of the abortion rights — 1967 Royal Commission on the Status of Women submission and defence of Morgentaler, on the united front tactic and its application to the building of the Vietnam antiwar movement, on the theory and practice of developing a vanguard party and entrism, and on the degeneration of Stalinism. Among the most important contributions of Canadian Trotskyism were the numerous articles, pamphlets, and documents analyzing the development of the CCF/NDP as the expression of independent, working-class politics and their significance for advancing revolutionary struggles in the context of the Transitional Program. The significance of this theoretical understanding found its way into the ranks of the Trotskyist movement in Scotland, England, Australia and New Zealand.

The disintegration of the radicalization in the post-1960's period has resulted in the scattering of files, documents, correspondence, leaflets, and internal bulletins among a wide variety of individuals and groups across Canada. As there has been no history of Canadian Trotskyism written, it is essential that these records be gathered together and made accessible to serious scholars of socialism or activists who wish to learn about our history. Have you kept mementos, internal bulletins, flyers, papers or correspondence? Rather than storing them or destroying them, please donate your materials to an archival project some of us are initiating. The comrades of the Forward Publishing Company already have accumulated some of this material, in particular many of the files of Ross Dowson, who, until recently led the movement from the 1940's onwards and is the most prominent Canadian Trotskyist figure alive.

The goal is to save our recorded history, to maintain it in a usable format and to make it available for reference or scholarly study. Our plan is to catalogue and classify the files for storage in a professionally maintained archive accessible to the public as a cohesive collection of historical materials whose presence would be made known in socialist, academic and labour circles. You can make an invaluable contribution to maintaining our recorded history. The contact for this project is:

Lois Dowson-Bédard,
Trotskyist Archives Project,
552 Church Street, Box 90, Toronto, Ont.
M4Y 2H0.

Let the Trotskyist movement's past and present influence our future. Contribute to our archive project.

"The trustees understand the curriculum requires you to teach Marxism. We just feel that you're not making it boring enough."

Why Socialists Should Oppose the Constitutional Accord

The courageous unanimous decision of the 24-member Executive Committee of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women representing 560 groups with 3,000,000 members to push for and mobilize its forces for a NO vote against the August 28 Constitutional Accord in the upcoming referendum deserves widespread solidarity from the left. NAC's position opposes the move to deny the Quebecois their right to determine their destiny as a nation, exposes some critical flaws in the deal, sets a precedent for others to speak out against it and poses the possibility of defeating the government on October 26. It's position stands in sharp contrast to the collapse of the NDP premiers.

TORONTO STAR FILE PHOTO

NAC President, Judy Rebick

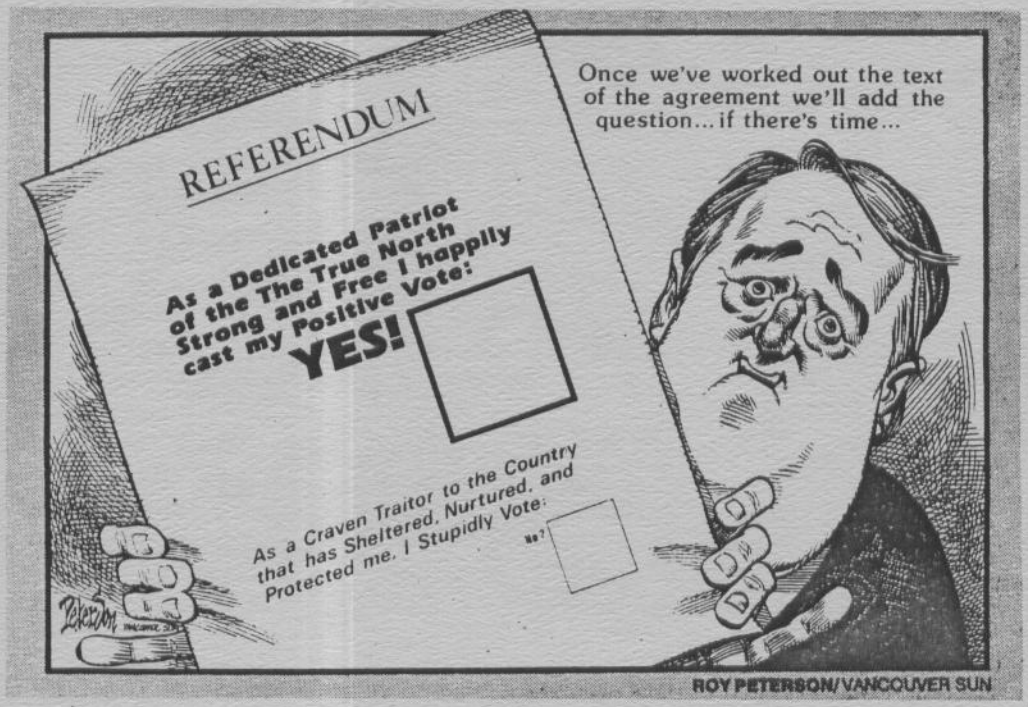
The decision of the NDP leaders to hitch their wagons to Prime Minister Mulroney's star is at best a self-destructive miscalculation and at worst, a serious betrayal of its working-class base. It puts a party rooted in the trade union movement which had captured the confidence of millions of Canadian workers in an alliance with the two political parties of big business, the National Council on Business Issues and the major banks and corporations in favour of maintaining *their* constitutional framework for Canada. It will blur the NDP as an alternative party, erase its distinctiveness in the public eye and tie the future fortunes of the Party to the unsavoury denouement of the constitutional crisis in its post-referendum stage.

By electing four NDP governments to power in Canada, including in its industrial heartland of Ontario, working people, in an unprecedented manner, put the NDP, as the voice of the labour movement, in a strategic position to make gains and wrest concessions from the unpopular Tory Government. The hopes of millions of voters were raised by these electoral victories, and the NDP had both an opportunity and a duty to meet these heightened expectations in which age-old voting patterns were cast aside by a politically awakened and economically threatened workingclass. In the context of the constitutional crisis, these four governments could have crystallized this growing consciousness by mobilizing hundreds of thousands of citizens in defence of social programs, for the right to full self-determination for the Québécois and Aboriginal Peoples and for a constituent assembly in English Canada to allow all sectors of society to reshape this country in an open, democratic manner.

From its position of strength, the NDP was uniquely suited to put forward its own vision of Canada and promote a social charter that would defend the labour movement and its allies--all policies that were enthusiastically adopted at the last NDP federal convention. Instead, the four Premiers gave up without a fight, settling for illusory concessions and ambiguous words. For a few crumbs, they gave up the loaf.

The Mulroney constitutional package is an integral part of the continentalist drive of Canada's corporations for the benefit of their senior U.S. partners. The Americanization of the Senate and the devolution of state functions to provincial governments is ancillary to the integrationist policies of corporate Canada. The Mulroney deal, which would never have floated given Mulroney's discredited and isolated state and the insipid and divided condition of the Liberal Party, without the enthusiastic support of the NDP Premiers, will hinder the gains of women, threaten federal programs, undermine Quebec's control over its language laws and revitalize a tired Tory government. The "gains" in the deal are purely deceptive--a social covenant, yes--but it is not enforceable; Native self-government, yes--but subject to our laws and without ownership of the land and resources to make it real; equal rights, yes--but not for Native women, minorities and disabled; recognizing Quebec's distinctiveness, yes--but not its right to choose sovereignty and subject to federal intervention to protect the besieged rights of the powerless (!) English. Add a litany of hollow words, subject to elaboration, endless negotiation and redefinition by courts, premiers' conferences and other institutions of class rule and you have Canada à la Mulroney-- tastily dissected and ready to be served to the U.S. gourmand.

The NDP leaders backed down from fulfilling the aspirations of the electorate precisely when they had the opportunity to lead a mass movement in defence of their program. They are now playing second fiddle in Mulroney's fraudulent charade of selling Canada out while pretending to save it. Cleverly, Mulroney succeeded in creating illusions among the Aboriginal leaders, long excluded from the constitutional process, who were influenced by the unprece-


REFERENDUM
As a Dedicated Patriot of the The True North Strong and Free I happily cast my Positive Vote:
YES!
As a Craven Traitor to the Country that has Sheltered, Nurtured, and Protected me, I Stupidly Vote:
Once we've worked out the text of the agreement we'll add the question... if there's time...
ROY PETERSON/VANCOUVER SUN

dented attention paid to them to the point of accepting the deal. However, the accommodation of Rae and the other NDP leaders to Mulroney's constitutional agenda marked a further retreat from a confrontation with the corporate elite when they actually could have made critical gains if they had confidence in and were prepared to mobilize their social base. In a word, they snatched defeat from the mouth of victory, placing the labour movement and the federal NDP in the untenable position of either splitting publicly with the Premiers or following their lead.

Thousands of New Democrats are disturbed by the co-option of their governments and Party. They should actively join the growing numbers of women, Natives, seniors, disabled, gays and lesbians and minorities--not to speak of the Québécois—who are saying no to a Big Business-backed constitution foisted on us by cynical politicians through an exclusionary process in which Natives and the NDP have played an ornamental role. Instead of leading the popular forces against the Mulroney deal and building support for our own vision of an independent socialist Canada, we have been left holding Mulroney's coattails.

There is a reason why NAC's blow against the deal has evoked supportive responses from other social forces. Canada's economic elite is too integrationist and its political establishment too continentalist to be able to whip up a reactionary nationalist hysteria for a credible majority for the "unity" deal. With the Québécois firm in their determination to assert their independence, with the continentalization of Canada's economy accelerating without let and with Canadians in larger numbers beginning to view the October 26 vote as a ruse designed to resolve nothing except Mulroney's unpopularity, it is only a matter of time before Canadians set out on the only course that can advance true independence and reshape this country in the image of its working people—socialist democracy. ✠

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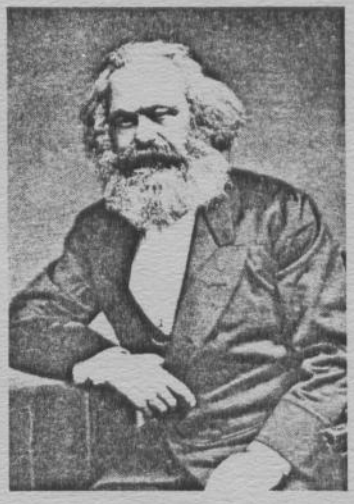

HELP MAKE IT HAPPEN!

This is the first issue of *The Bulletin of the Forward Group*. After a hiatus of about five years, we are publishing again in order to participate openly as Trotskyists in a critical turning point for the left — at the crossroads of the demise of Stalinism coupled with a profound crisis of the capitalist economies, and, concomitantly, of the reformist parties.

Does the left need another publication when so many have come and gone, each fervently proclaiming its monopoly on the truth? We feel that ours fills an important gap in the radical press.

Firstly, our contributors have persons with an extensive background in Marxism and the mass movements who bring their experiences to bear in the New Democratic Party and the labour and social movements. We promote class struggle demands that have mobilized large numbers. Unlike sectarian groups who guard their purity by staying on the sidelines, we are eager to get our hands "dirty" in the partial struggles in which workers often find themselves.

The Bulletin will deal with issues facing the whole class, such as the constitutional crisis, continental integration, the NDP and women's issues. Our aim is to provide programmatic clarity, to promote unified action and to open our pages to all radical views.

Secondly, we strive, as do others, to achieve a consistent commitment to the method of Marxism in the traditions of Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg and Leibknecht. We share a deep sympathy with the socialist forces in the Fourth International. *But* we believe these ideas and the means for their realization must be determined in the context of the Canadian class struggle, not from abstract formulae or lifeless shibboleths. *We seek to Canadianize Marxism.*

Finally, we welcome an exchange of insights and evaluations which will benefit all revolutionists in the NDP, labour, women's, antiwar and solidarity movements We want a dialogue beyond our own groups, ridings or spheres of activity to deal with the broader strategic questions. We hope *The Bulletin* will contribute to the clarification and necessary regroupment that will precede common activities on a principled basis. Our modest hope is to distill our daily experiences in the movements for social change, not as proprietors of absolute truths.

The revolutionary left has undergone a major testing of theories and experiences. Symptomatic of this testing are the demise of many radical grouplets and the wrenching split of the Canadian Communist Party. We remain firm in holding to the experience that has guided us in attempting to apply a serious strategic intervention in the Canadian class struggle without succumbing to sectarianism, ultraleftism or opportunist adaptation. You will find a detailed exposition of these ideas in our pages. It is our hope to circulate our ideas and open a serious discussion in the Canadian revolutionary left as widely as possible. We seek to provide historic analysis and direction to radicals rethinking their understanding of Canada.

The Bulletin has the potential and obligation to focus the most incisive debates among Canadian socialists. But it will only happen if our readers participate in and promote this dialogue. Your contribution of $25.00, $50.00, $100.00 or more will ensure our publication and circulation from sea to sea to sea. A cohesive, unified Marxist left with roots in the NDP and labour movement is possible through non-sectarian and cooperative efforts. Gain the satisfaction of helping make it happen. All contributions will go to promote the production and circulation of *The Bulletin*.

I would like to contribute to The Bulletin of the Forward Group.

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LEFT CAUCUS NEWSLETTER

Winter / Spring 1993 Vol.5 No.1

Canadian Auto Workers Report points left

Discussion needed!

By Gord Doctorow and Lois Bédard, Co-chairs, Ontario Left Caucus

For the first time since the NDP was elected to power in September 1990 in Ontario, the possibility exists for significant forces to mobilize in defence of the Party's program and against the corporate assault which has thrown it off balance. In his Report to the

Buzz Hargrove, Auto Workers President, calls for debate on the direction of ONDP.

National Council of the Canadian Auto Workers on December 11-13, 1992, which was endorsed by several hundred delegates following a full discussion, CAW President Buzz Hargrove provided an analysis of the crisis in the ONDP which amounted to a call for action to keep the Party on course. Already an NDP riding has called on the NDP Provincial Council to invite Hargrove to address the Council meeting in Toronto on March 27th and 28th on his perspective.

It is critical that members of the Party openly greet this discussion as a healthy and necessary step to revitalize the ONDP. In his covering letter sent with his National Council Report to the ONDP Caucus, Hargrove motivates the need for a change of direction for the ONDP. We reprint below the covering letter in full, as well as the portion of his Report which deals with the NDP.

The background for this statement is easy to ascertain. Auto workers have suffered tremendously from the erosion of Ontario's industrial base, accelerated by the Free Trade Act. In St. Catharines, a work force of 8,000 will be reduced to half its size by 1994. The collapse of Air Canada through privatization and deregulation has pitted their former workers against their fellow workers in Canadian Airlines. Such acts of privatization and deregulation were an essential part of the terms of the NAFTA, which were left untouched by the proposals contained in the Charlottetown Accord so enthusiastically supported by the Rae leadership. Rollbacks, cutbacks and layoffs have devastated employees' lives as Mulroney pursues a corporate agenda which has drained hundreds of thousands of industrial jobs to the United States.

Hargrove's critique of the ONDP for failing to mobilize its membership and the labour movement behind an industrial strategy to help put Canadian workers' interests above those of the corporations represents the clearest and most incisive assessment made by a labour or NDP leader of the conse-

Discussion - page 6

*** EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW ***

Drainville speaks out on casino gambling

We reprint below an interview by Jeff Smith of the *Left Caucus Newsletter* with Victoria-Haliburton New Democrat MPP Dennis Drainville. Drainville has been the most outspoken critic of the government's plans to legalize casino gambling in Ontario. He has bravely bucked pressures from the leadership circles to silence his views. A recent effort to silence Drainville has been rebuffed. Still, Bob Rae has threatened discipline up to expulsion from the caucus for dissidents like Drainville, who has publicly announced his intention to oppose casino legislation when it is presented for adoption shortly after the Legislature returns to session this April. The Left Caucus feels Drainville should be congratulated for his moral courage instead of being denigrated for his principled position. The Party membership should defend the right to dissent of all NDP MPPs on issues where the Party has either no position at all or has a position which is in opposition to proposed government legislation. Otherwise the principles of accountability and party democracy would be severely threatened. You can show your support for Dennis Drainville by writing your letters of protest to:
Premier Bob Rae, Ontario Legislature, Queen's Park, Toronto, M7A 2R9, with copies to Drainville at the same address, c/o NDP Caucus.

JS: Why are you opposed to the province opening casinos?

DD: I believe that casino gambling, like most forms of gambling, is just another tax on the poor. I think that we have a great deal of tradition in our party as regards the use of monies that come through lotteries, that has always said that people should not be receiving something for nothing, and that the fruits of their labour will be things that will be up-building and supportive of the whole community. J.S. Woodsworth, Stanley Knowles, M.J. Coldwell and Tommy Douglas and David Lewis--all of them have commented on being against the use of lottery funds and I believe that tradition is something we need to maintain even though we are now the Government of Ontario. I think that the move of the NDP to expand lotteries and to establish casino gambling, in a sense, is not what we should be doing as a government for

Casinos - page 2

Published by the Steering Committee of the ONDP Left Caucus
Box 39, 552 Church Street, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2E3

re Weisleder

MEMO

Weisleder called on February 8, 1993, to seek clarification of our letter to him saying that we could not support the May Day event as an organization but would be available to speak and would likely attend as individuals. He wanted clarification of what he considered to be a "mixed message". I clarified it for him. He indicated that if we would not promote the activity within our organization, the SC may wish to consider whether we should be invited as speakers. I indicated to him that other organizations had been invited to speak without endorsing or supporting the action itself in the past and he indicated that we were in a different category as we were a revolutionary tendency (implying that we were also not as significant as some of these tendencies). I told him we just couldn't do anything that would involve us accepting responsibility for their exclusionary policy. He accused us of elevating this issue out of proportion and I told him that it was not me but Trotsky who elevated concern about exclusionary policies to a principle in the early 1930's in his battle against Stalinist exclusion of Trotskyist.

The conversation moved to other and less contentious matters thereafter.

SPECIAL EDITION

LEFT CAUCUS NEWSLETTER

Autumn 1993 Volume 6 No.2

What happened to the NDP?

Left on the defensive

For many years, the left in the NDP was put on the defensive by accusations that it was overly ideological. At convention, riding and Provincial Council meetings, we were made to feel like spluttering dogmatists, even intimidated from saying what we knew was right by a sense that we were impractical, unrealistic, harmful to the Party, almost like intruders who were spoiling a good time.

When the NDP was elected in September, 1990, this fear of being marginalized by our emphasis on the fundamental principles of socialism—democratic economic planning, production for use instead of profit, public ownership of the productive wealth of our country— was magnified one thousand fold. After all, didn't the NDP get elected under the leadership of pragmatist Bob Rae? Didn't this show that the options before the NDP were wide and various, and that leftist ideologues had to let the leadership stay in the driver's seat, for a while at least withholding judgement? The NDP's electoral success muted the left, though deep in our hearts, we knew that history would absolve us, to borrow a phrase from the 1960's.

Unfortunately, we didn't have to wait for long. No matter how much we try to get away from it, the fact remains that the biggest mistake that the CCF-NDP made was to dump the Regina Manifesto. Virtually every single political error of significance that the Government has made resulted from its abandonment of a vision of an alternate society that would put people before profit and democratic economic planning before the chaos of an unregulated market. Its break from the traditions of the Regina Manifesto, from the perspectives of J.S. Woodsworth and Agnes McPhail, of William Irvine and Tommy Douglas, left the Ontario Party without a rudder, pressured by the powers that be to do their bidding at the expense of the public interest.

Though public service workers are paying the biggest price right now for this breach of our traditions, the cost of abandoning our roots has also eroded the NDP's credibility among every other social sector that has ever identified with our Party. Despite all this, the message the left must bring to the remaining ranks of the NDP, and also to those who have walked away from the Party in disgust, is really not different from what we have had to say in the past: only socialism can steer the NDP back on course.

Is it a question of leadership?

Some on the left who focus primarily on the leadership issue fail to see that it is only a small part of the total picture. The problem with the NDP leadership is not that it is incompetent or weak or that it was always prepared to sell the NDP out. The crisis of the NDP's leadership is rooted in its ideology and not in its personal composition.

Look what happened when we took office. The international economic forces that are behind the erosion of Ontario's manufacturing industry left the NDP Government two choices—move cautiously towards socialism or attempt to manage a capitalist welfare state economy in a condition of pending crisis.

Not only Bob Rae, but the entire NDP cabinet, failed to promote a vision of extending the public domain into the heights of the economy through a democratic plan under public control. Not a single Member of

Continued on page 2

Published by the Steering Committee of the ONDP Left Caucus
Box 39, 552 Church Street, Toronto Ontario M4Y 2E3

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LEFT CAUCUS NEWSLETTER
Winter 1993 Vol.5 No.3

Labour's political future

Millions of workers voted last month for a federal Liberal Government to stop the slash and burn policies and the mass unemployment created by the Tories. But why was the NDP not a factor in this equation? In fact, why was the NDP shunted aside by so many workers as irrelevant to their aspirations?

Union leaders failed to challenge the Ontario government's drift to the right within the NDP. Will they now rebuild the Party as a pro-labour and socialist instrument?

It took more than 60 years of hard work in the CCF and NDP to reach this stage. The organized labour movement always looked to the NDP as its political voice in Parliament. Many workers were gradually won over as the election of NDP governments in the provinces attests. The New Democratic Party was founded with the support and the backing of the cross-Canada labour movement. Labour has always had a decisive organizational presence inside the NDP through its role in providing financial backing and election workers. If the Party did not belong to the labour movement as such, at least it was our hope, our friend, our ally, our defender and our voice in the political arena.

Still, while the NDP was labour's home, labour was not master in its own political house. The leadership of the Party fell to persons outside the labour movement. Though we sat on the Party's Councils, we never had control. Though persons from the labour movement held key positions, our roles were symbolic. in the

Labour - page 2

Who we are

The Left Caucus of the NDP is supported by trade unionists and social activists who believe that a pro-labour and pro-socialist perspective is indispensable if labour is to have a meaningful political voice. Months before the Social Contract was proposed in the NDP, we campaigned actively to organize a debate within the NDP to bring the views of trade unionists such as CAW President Buzz Hargrove into the Party. Left caucus supporters campaigned in both the public and private sector unions as well as within the NDP against the Social Contract Act and for an emergency policy convention of the Party. The lead article in this issue reflects the views of trade unionists on the Left Caucus Steering Committee.

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Excerpts from:

"Giving Away A Miracle: Lost dreams, broken promises & the Ontario NDP"

(On the NDP in power in Ontario 1990-1994)

George Ehring & Wayne Roberts (1993)

(Page 31)

In his critique of NDP economics, *Rethinking the Economy,* James Laxer writes that: "The new conservatism is anchored in the 'new selfishness,' the belief that human beings are fundamentally competitive and self-aggrandizing, and the sooner you equip yourself to face up to your own meanness, the better off you will be. The new conservatism is two parts pop psychology and one part astrology. With it we are abandoning traditional values and heading straight for the ouija board."

Laxer criticized the party in the early 1980s for sticking to Keynesian economics long after the conditions that made it work were no longer operating. He says the NDP's central tenet is "increasing effective demand through the injection of stimulus into the economy." They have ignored the need to develop an industrial strategy that makes sense in Canada's foreign-owned economy, and stuck with the economic ideas of the 1950s.

This may be one reason why New Democrats seemed powerless to confront the neo-conservative juggernaut, and shied away from policies that directly interfered with capital's control of the economy. More and more Bob Rae was talking about the party's belief in a mixed economy, and returning to traditional ethical concerns of fairness.

The party's credibility on economic issues has remained low even among people the NDP most hopes to reach: working-class, unionized, the poor and the powerless.

6. Romancing the Working Class

For years the NDP fought against "Sunday working." Demanding a "common pause day" when families could be together, Rae vowed to crack down on Sunday shopping. After almost two years in office, Rae abandoned both party policy and organized labour, and sold off Sunday shopping.

The party had never complained about all the workers in the tourist, manufacturing and broader public sectors who had long worked on Sundays, nor did it seem to notice that with changing work schedules, the best opportunity many people have to shop is on Sunday. Ironically, working people were among those most in favour of having the option to shop. A Goldfarb poll found that 83 per cent of single parents were in favour, as were 73 per cent of union households, and 69 per cent of women who work fulltime.

In opposing "Sunday working," the NDP clung to its romantic 1930s notion of workers: impoverished, oppressed victims of a hardhearted, ruthless management.

(pages 20 to 28) ***NDP EVALUATION & HISTORICAL NOTES ONLY***

PART ONE: (Second excerpt)

(...) *Within days, they were thrown out of their hostels and onto the streets. According to*

Melnyk, "The bewildered men milled around aimlessly, waiting for something to happen. Before long, CCF workers began pulling up in their trucks and cars and handing out protest signs, sandwiches and flasks of hot coffee. After wolfing down the sandwiches, most of the men decided to rake up the party's offer to feed and house them in CCF headquarters and ciubrooms around the city." In two days, Hepburn capitulated.

But by the middle of the 1940s, CCF members could already see a change in this type of direct action. John Smith, a grassroots organizer for the CCF, says once the party merged its CCF clubs into riding associations the election machine became more important rhan organizing and education. "A close friend of mine in the left wing used to say that the CCF's purpose was to emancipate the workers, one by one. It didn't mean electing CCF members to Parliament, one by one," he says.

The NDP brass has gone all out to build a modern political patty, complete with the trappings that entails: sophisticated polling, membership gathering, direct mail fundraising appeals, and a reliance on the media to deliver their message to the electorate.

A movement is grassroots, visionary, educational and organizational. A party is technocratic, professional, pragmatic and opportunistic.

The NDP thinks it is more important to have its elected members sitting on endless legislative committees than organizing in their communities. It puts a higher priority on getting Bob Rae into the legislature than onto the street. New Democrats have lost the fire in their bellies that CCFers had. For a social movement that means malnutrition.

4. Keeping the Labour Brass Polished

The first budget handed down by Ontario's NDP government included a special "gas guzzler" tax on cars with low fuel economy ratings. The tax was implemented without input from the Canadian Auto Workers' Union, which vigorously opposed the tax when it was announced.

Less than two months later, the tax-had been "rejigged," according to the CAW newsletter: a nice way of saying the government had had a change of heart. CAW President Bob White said "the industry admitted they could not show how the original tax would cost jobs," and took pride in announcing that this was the first time "that a budget item was changed as a result of our presentations."

Big labour backs the NDP, provides it with money and volunteers, serves as the pipeline of the NDP message to its workforce, and supports the party heavies in internal fights whenever it is called upon to do so. At election time, labour unions provide countless organizers and campaign workers, paid for by the unions. For these reasons, the NDP keeps the labour brass polished.

Although the NDP and the unions claim their legitimacy comes from the rank-and-file, they are top-down in their operation. Their parallel structures enable the two bureaucracies to mesh easily together, make decisions, and carry them out by instinct. Professor Robert Martin says: "The Ontario NDP is not the party of ordinary workers, it is the party of the [union] staff, the...reps. For this reason, the labour movement has not been able to deliver trade union votes for the NDP."

Like identical twins who read each other's minds, heads of unions or the Ontario Federation of Labour have ready access to the leadership of the NDP, and know each other's thoughts. Unlike social movements, which are often painstakingly slow in arriving at a consensus, labour leaders can make snap decisions and count on their organizations to act on them without much need for approval by their membership.

The party brass and labour leaders have an old boy's network relation ship. It helps account for the fact that there are so few new faces or new ideas. In a movement that sees itself under attack from so many quarters, they rely on personal bonds and trusted insiders like a Mafia family does; the Mafia, however, are usually better dressed. This creates a huge contingent ofyesmen and yeswomen, another factor in their lack of inspiration.

Until negotiations broke down on Rae's "social contract" talks in June, 1993, the labour and NDP bureaucracies were as tight as hand in glove. A more accurate description would show the NDP in big labour's back pocket removing bills from labour's wallet.

Whenever they are called upon, union leaders back the party bosses in any internal parry division without regard to the particular issue. This goes to extremes. There have even been times when labour delegates to NDP conventions have been ordered to vote against the very resolutions they had supported at their own meetings. Labour delegates stand up and applaud on command; they are the NDP's trained seals.

Labour support isn't just guaranteed — it comes gift-wrapped. The labour leadership delivers considerable numbers of these loyal delegates to NDP conventions or the party's quarterly provincial council meetings — up to approximately one quarter of those voting.

These delegates, whose expenses and lost work time are normally paid in full by their unions, receive their instructions on how to vote at a "labour caucus" meeting held before any parry debate takes place. With few exceptions, labour delegates vote in a block. "Solidarity" is imposed through

heavy pressure on the labour members, many of whom are union staff subject to the discipline of their organization. Unions mistake conformity for solidarity, or at least care more about it—a message the party has learned well from them.

In return for delivering the vote at NDP meetings, and as a result of the tightness of their bureaucratic relationship, labour has a tremendous influence on party policy and tactics.

While in opposition the NDP adopted not just labour's position on proposed legislation or specific issues but often allowed labour to dictate the degree of support or opposition. As we will show, this was the case even though there were times when the party had a different point of view, a different tactical approach, or an entirely different set of priorities. There were many times in the 1980s when the caucus had other issues it wanted to pursue but had to take on union demands.

But big labour has always had a working relationship with the governing party, either Conservatives or Liberals. Though they could count on the NDP to deliver their line on labour issues, union leaders knew they had to deal directly with whomever was in power.

Bob Spencer, former NDP chairperson of the Toronto Board of Educa tion, says that unions generally didn't see the NDP as an effective opposition. "The NDP is just a

complaints bureau," he says. "Workers don't see the NDP as their improver, let alone as their saviour."

Perhaps an indication of this lack of effectiveness is that labourpleaders rarely give up the power they have in their union and the influence they have with government to run for elected office as New Democrats or to take full-time party jobs. Charlotte Yates, author of a doctoral thesis on the United Auto Workers' Union in Canada, says that unionists "don't see the NDP as having any power, so they're happy to leave the leadership to someone else. The unions are realistic in not going for power in the NDP — they have more influence for direct action and control through their union."

This was not always the case. When the Ontario CCF won 34 seats in the 1943 Ontario election — having had none before — nineteen of its caucus were trade unionists. They included the heads of the Steelworkers' and Mine, Mill and Smelter unions.

When it comes to delivering the NDP message to workers, labour acts as a filter for the party. The labour movement couldn't tolerate the Waffle's direct involvement in labour struggles, and by forcing its expulsion won the understanding that the party would consult with unions before it took positions on labour issues. Even during elections, the NDP speaks through the labour brass when addressing workers: appeals to rank-and-file members to support NDPers come in letters from the heads of various unions — not from Bob Rae.

"The party is trapped," says Terry Moore, a former NDP researcher now on staff with the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union. "Unions are its only access to workers. It has no strategy, no tactics, no interest in the day to day struggles with workers. They're two solitudes and they can't step on each other."

Part of this division comes from an understanding that the party and labour revolve in different spheres. Labour has the day-to-day world of the economic marketplace to cope with; the NDP lives and dies in the market place of politics.

Labour has to negotiate contracts, wage strikes, train activists,' fight grievances and arbitrations, and organize new workplaces. Unions bargain changes for workers that directly and immediately affect those workers' lives. Their issues are bread and butter. The decisions they make have an immediacy: do we ratify this agreement?, do we go on strike?, will we win this certification?

Unions conduct the economic struggle; the party does the politics. Often there is a relationship, of course, but there is also an understanding between the two that they have different roles to play. This distinction doesn't exist in the real world, and that poses problems for both labour and the NDP. Labour "contracts out" its politics to the NDP, while the NDP doesn't develop a sensible economic platform.

But despite its nitty-gritty economic experience, the labour movement gets locked into its own orthodoxy and rarely develops imaginative solutions to changing times. At the same time, since the NDP borrows its economic policies from organized labour, when the two have a rare falling out, as they did during the social contract talks, labour leaders have nothing new to offer.

The inability of the NDP to develop a series of economic proposals that make sense to

workers, what we call lunch-bucket economics, is therefore partly a result of its relationship to the labour movement itself. It has always been a serious problem for the credibility of the NDP.

==========*Start of boxed text*==========

Labour affiliation and the CCF/NDP

Until the 16,000-member Oshawa local of the Canadian Autoworkers' Union voted to sever its ties with the NDP in the spring of 1993, there was little discussion about the merits of affiliation between organized labour and the NDP. It was taken for granted that affiliation was in their mutual interest. That had not always been the case.

The "federation" referred to in the name Cooperative Commonwealth Federation was farmer-labour-socialist. "Labour" meant small independent labour parties, not unions. In fact, when the CCF constitution was drawn up in Regina in 1933, union affiliation wasn't even mentioned.

For many years the Trades and Labour Congress (TLC), Canada's largest union federation in the 1920s and 1930s, rejected direct political involvement. Throughout the 1930s, after the founding of the CCF, the TLC continued to affirm its opposition to union/CCF ties.

The party's federal secretary, David Lewis, thought the CCF could never become a mass movement until unions affiliated in a big way. In 1937, the national CCF convention called on the party to push affiliation with trade unions. Nothing happened on this front until the United Mine Workers District 26 in Nova Scotia decided to sign up in August, 1938. For the first time, rules had to be made to deal with the issue.

Lewis, who learned first-hand about British labour politics while a Rhodes scholar at Oxfotd, turned to the constitution of the British Labour Party for guidance. The CCF's new rules required the payment of dues to the party on the basis of numbers of members and adherence to CCF policies. Labour delegates to CCF bodies could not belong to any other political party. These rules were approved at the CCF convention in 1940.

No other affiliations occurred until 1942. By that time, the CCF was growing in popularity and the fust Ontario CCF MP had been elected, in the riding of York South, later held by David Lewis federally and Donald MacDonald and Bob Rae provincially. Labour's federations were changing, including the founding of the industrial Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) in 1940. Interest in union affiliation took off.

Right away the CCF feared trade union domination of the party, and, departing from the British Labour Party sysrem, decided not to allow bloc voting. Ballots were supposed to be cast by local unions voting separately, not by one labour leader who carried proxies from the entire membership. Furthermore, representation would be adjusted to ensure that affiliated union, members could not outnumber individual members.

In the Ontario provincial election of August, 1943, the CCF leaped from none to an astonishing 34 seats and formed the Official Opposition. The ruling Conservatives elected just 38 members. Of the CCF's 34 members, nineteen were trade unionists, including Charlie Millard, head of the Sreelworkers' union, and Robert Carlin, the Mine,

Mill and Smelter workers' pioneer organizer.

Just weeks later, the CCI. convention overwhelmingly endorsed rhe CCF and recommended affiliation of its locals to the parry.

At that time many union leaders in Canada were Communists. David Lewis figured the CCF would have to smash the CP influence over unions before affiliation could proceed in great numbers. Communists opposed formal ties with the CCF because they felt the party was only interested in electoral politics, and because the CCF wouldn't grant real power to labour organizations inside the party.

Lewis commie-bashed with a passion that lasted long after they posed any problem for the CCF or NDP. He used whatever allies he could muster, including those south of rhe border. In *The Unfinished Journey,* his biography of the Lewis family, Cameron Smith recounts that in the famous struggle between the Steelworkers and Mine Mill in Sudbury, Lewis collaborated with the U.S. Labour Secretary to get Mine Mill declared a CP union. Later, he worked with American UAW leader Walter Rcuther to get the union in Canada on side in an effort to root Communists out of the United Electrical Workers union. Lewis also used Reuther to get the UAW to endorse the CCF, doing an end run around Canadian UAW director Ceorge Burt, who for years tolerated Communists.

In 1944, affiliation with the CCF federally had risen to 100 locals with about 50,000 members, but then stalled. By 1952 it had fallen off to 44 locals with just over 16,000 members. Fewer than 6,000 were in Ontario. Affiliated locals and the party organization had little contact with each other. As the party's electoral fortunes hit the skids, neither labour nor the CCF pushed affiliation until they decided to form rhe NDP.

To the extent, and for the brief time, that it existed in significant numbers, union affiliation in the CCF was bureaucratic. It did little to bring politics to the rank-and-file members of the locals who joined, and it gave labour very little voice in the party.

In 1956 the newly-formed Canadian Labour Congress called for the creation of a new party. (The CLC was a merger of the industrial-union- based Canadian Congress of Labour and the trade-based Trades and Labour Congress.) Although many CCFers blamed their lack of success on the fact that labour support had been only lukewarm, rhe CCF brass encouraged the move and was looking for a way ro make stronger ties with labour. They also hoped to "liberalize" the CCF by attracting middle-class Liberal supporters, since many party bosses mistakenly thought Liberals were a dying breed. The 1958 Diefenbaker sweep gave them hope that a two-party, Conservative/CCF split would emerge, just as in Britain, the birthplace of socialism.

Other factors supported the push for a new party. Unions had abandoned their militant offensive of the 1940s in favour of slow and steady piecemeal growth through bargaining; this cooled the political scene. The post-war boom turned into a cold-war downturn; rhe CCF retreated from class politics; and Lewis had a long-standing distrust of farmers, whom he thought were conservative and not too bright.

Cameron Smith also cites a few letters by Lewis that show the Oxford scholar's unflattering attitude to working-class people. On Cape Breton miners in 1938, and their affiliation to the CCF, Lewis wrote; "it will all depend on whether...we can find a dozen men who can be relied on to remain always sober and can be trained into an intelligent consciousness of what we're after." He wrote to his wife in 1939 from Windsor: "Nothing is more tiring than talking about big things to little people."

The CLC and CCF each appointed 10 members to sit on a committee to form the new party. Though they later added 10 more representatives from "New Party Clubs", most of whom were the type of middle-class professionals they wanted to attract, it was clear that labour had more clout than ever in the party.

In 1961, the New Democratic Party was formed and Saskatchewan Premier Tommy Douglas stepped down to become its first national leader. Labour's ries were formalized in representation, financial arrangement and access to NDP leaders. Incidentally, neither the words "socialist" or "democratic socialism" appeared in the NDP constitution or program adopted at the founding convention.

At the outset some people supported a move to give affiliated union members the same rights as individual NDP party members. This was fought by the old CCFers, including Donald C. MacDonald, head of the Ontario party. They argued that it would take the steam out of signing up individuals and would destroy the image of a broadly-based party. Within a few years, both union and NDP brass decided to limit votes at party meetings to regular party members. Nonetheless, affiliation stalled individual membership drives, since workers figured they already "belonged" to the party through their union, and they saw their money go in the form of check-off from their wages.

These days, rhe merits of union affiliation in the NDP are rarely discussed. Both sides seem satisfied with the arrangement, and from the reasons outlined in the text, it is clear why labour and party bosses are happy.

In 1992, the Ontario NDP had about 200,000 affiliated members, which brought about $150,000 to the party. But it is still worth asking if union affiliation is good for the party, the labour movement or working people.

Long-time socialist and leading Steelworker staffer Murray Cotterill opposed affiliation to the CCF on the grounds that it would de-politicize unions. Cotterill was national director of the Political Action Committee of the Canadian Congress of Labour in the early 1950s, and as he saw it, unions should form their own PACs and agitate, educate and organize for their own agenda. During elections, the PACs would question each party and inform the membership which party was closest to their interests as workers. In that way, the unions remained free to push their own issues for their own reasons. It allowed members to make up their own minds on which party served them best. Cotterill resigned from the director's post in January, 1952, after losing a battle with David Lewis on the issue.

Neil Reimer, long-time head of the Energy and Chemical Workers' union, now merged with pulp and communications workers, and former chairperson of the CLC's Political Action Committee, is another union ist who opposes bureaucratic affiliation. Reimet agrees that direct affiliation is the result of British influence and the British Labour Party model, but points out that the class base of politics is very much more accepted in Britain than it is in Canada. When the new party was being formed, Reimer argued against direct affiliation because it would be an alternative for going our and getting workers to join the party in their community, and because it would cement a bureaucracy-to-bureaucracy relationship between the party and organized labour.

Affiliation has rarely been used as a tool of class education or mobilization. It guarantees union boss control with little input from rank-and-file members. Despite their

fears of British-style bloc voting, the NDP wound up with it anyway, without the direct input from ordinary workers whose check-off deductions sustain the party. The NDP also suffers from the image of being in labour's pocket, but doesn't have the advantage that signing up individual workers would bring. The party doesn't benefit from the good points of unions: collective bargaining gains, representation on occupational health and safety concerns, stand ing up for workers' rights in grievances and arbitrations, and others, since workers see these as quire distinct from rhe union's relationship to the parry. And since affiliation has been more closely linked to private sector unions, many people in the growing class of white-collar, public sector workers were left out of the party. The Canadian Union of Public Employees and some sections of the Public Service Alliance of Canada are exceptions.

For unions, affiliation has usually meant a "contracting out"'of poll tics to the NDP; thus labour becomes a passive partner in political change. Unions let the NDP play politics for them rather than educating their own membership in political activism or on particular issues. It has meant not an increase, but a drop in the politics of the labour movement, since unions are no longer the vehicle of class politics.

Though local union politics played a big role in the disaffiliation of the CAW Oshawa local from the NDP in May, 1993, it is important to point out that the impetus for the drive did not come from workers who thought the NDP had betrayed them. Instead, it came from some who were angered by progressive commitments the government made. Once the ball was rolling, even those workers who were predisposed to support the NDP felt little enthusiasm for rhe government, and the disaffiliation succeeded by a two-to-one margin. Though for the wrong reasons, the Oshawa move forced other union locals to think about their ties with the party.

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5. Figuring Economic Policies that Add Up

In the first weeks after he became premier, one of Bob Rae's favorite lines was that he finally got the keys to the car, only to discover that it was an Edsel.

Rae's government did have the misfortune to come to office just as the deepest recession to hit Canada since the Depression of the 1930s took hold. Faced with bad economic times, the NDP floundered, dithered, acted like left wingers in running up a big deficit to try to stimulate the economy and like right-wingers in selling off government assets. If it looked confused, that's because it is.

A lot of people think the NDP is out to lunch on economics. That's because it never developed lunch-bucket economics.

Early CCF leaders believed in what's called the "social gospel:" a set of mainly Protestant religious ideals founded in the early twentieth century that

(... end page 28)

PATH TO LABOUR UNITY

Vol 7. No. 2

LEFT CAUCUS NEWSLETTER

The labour movement is in a state of crisis. Its very survival as a united movement in the face of the relentless onslaught of the bosses is at stake. A deep rift divides the public sector unions from several private sector unions. In addition, some private sector unions that used to be the backbone of NDP campaigns in Ontario have withdrawn from active participation in the Party. The ranks are disoriented. The Ontario Federation of Labour leadership speaks of unity but the reality is much different.

SPECIAL 1994 CONVENTION EDITION

In the opinion of the ONDP Left Caucus, which holds to socialist views and traditions within the Party and the labour movement, the critical task before us is to reunite all pro-labour forces along a clear class solidarity perspective. We need a political party and leadership as loyal to the labour movement as the Liberals and Tories have been to the corporate sector that dominates Canadian society.

When the NDP was unexpectedly catapulted into power in 1990, its leadership sought to use the levers of governmental power to achieve its goals. It abandoned any concept of mobilizing the social base of the NDP: the membership of the NDP, the labour movement or the social movements, in defending or advancing the programme upon which it was elected against the cutbacks by big business and its allies. Eventually this strategy unhinged the Party from the movements that gave it reasons for being and isolated it from its base as it became the target of a vicious campaign backed by anti-labour forces, developers and the corporate controlled media. Without rooting itself in the forces that elected it and mobilizing women, tenants, minorities, working people and the social coalitions, the lifeblood of the Party–it inevitably surrendered to the status quo under the right wing assault.

Yet even the negative experience of the last four years can have their lessons.

Never again can we leave the representation of labour's interests and politics to a corps of professional politicians detached from the daily struggle. Those who lead us in politics as well as in the workplace must always serve the interests of workers and their allies. The union leadership failed to ensure that an active mobilized membership rooted in the ongoing struggles of working people and connected to the social movements was always there to bolster the NDP leadership. Any NDP government will become trapped in the parliamentary games played by establishment politicians if it limits its strategy to parliamentary manoeuvres. Such machinations only hide the reality that a tiny, powerful, wealthy few make all the critical decisions that affect the economic well-being of the workers, farmers and students of Ontario.

Second, we must never allow our political representatives to drift from the principles of solidarity which have inspired the labour movement and won it every single gain of significance from medicare to unemployment insurance. The NDP in government has become a prisoner of the capitalist parliamentary system which has rightfully become the subject of much contempt by the citizens. An NDP government which sends cops after welfare recipients has caved into the pressures of this elite system and violated the principle of "one for all and all for one". What socialist or democratic legitimacy can there be for singling out public servants as victims of the recession through the Social Contract Act while allowing the Royal Bank to rake in one billion dollars worth of profits almost completely untaxed?

Many human rights constituencies feel that the NDP Government has betrayed them. The lesbian, gay and bisexual community is right to complain about a free vote on Bill 28 which involved a matter of principle for all New Democrats–human rights. Similarly, the NDP Government shamelessly capitulated last year to police demands for bigger guns with "more stopping [read killing] power". The Human Rights Commission remains financially starved. Employment equity and pay equity legislation have been passed in piecemeal fashion with many weaknesses and omissions. Even old age pensioners and disabled living in non-profit housing have seen their rents increase from 25% to 30% of their pensions while OHIP coverage has been eliminated entirely for foreign students, thereby deepening inequalities and inequities that we should be eliminating. At the same time, the ONDP government has utterly failed to tax the super-rich and especially the banks and financial institutions which have siphoned off so much through interest charges on public debt. By passing these measures, we not only have dumped our socialist "baggage" but we have allowed Tory and Liberal governments throughout Canada to use Ontario as an example to justify their own severe cutbacks.

With an election in sight, it is tempting to avoid raising issues which involve self-criticism. However, what is the point of taking power if we lose our sense of social solidarity and just end up administrating the status quo, or worse still, doing the dirty work for the economic elite? Real unity cannot be achieved by papering over our differences. We need to clear the air. The unity of the labour movement and its political voice can only be reasserted by no longer blurring

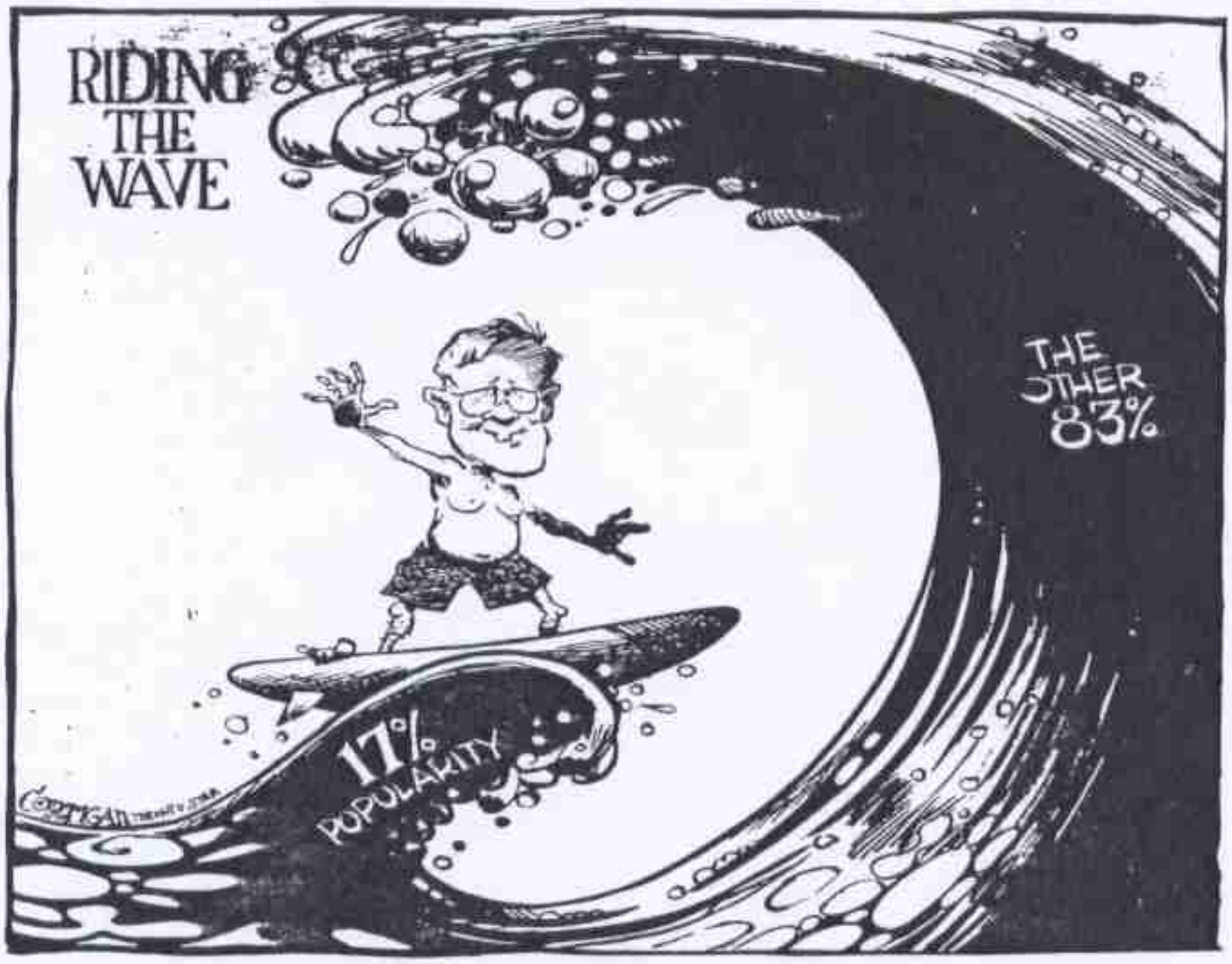
our message.

We know the Party is in crisis. Members have quit in droves. Ridings are inactive. Criticism is taboo. Finances have plummeted. Loyalty to the Party leadership has superseded loyalty to the social vision which gave birth to the NDP and the labour movement. Criticism, no matter how slight, is treated as betrayal. Provincial Council meetings have become staged rubber stamps and photo-ops for Premier Bob Rae. Accountability of the Government to the Party has become a cruel joke. Convention resolutions are treated with a studied indifference when not openly ridiculed by government leaders. Even our past has been wiped out by engineered rules to drop our convention policy through the sneaky expedient of "sunset clauses". It is clear that the final result of the NDP leadership's relying on a hostile Government bureaucracy and official structures of power to achieve its goals instead of on the working people of Ontario has been to deepen divisions and undermine solidarity.

The labour leadership bears full and equal responsibility for the tragic degeneration of the NDP. It failed to mobilize the ranks behind the implementation of the NDP's electoral platform. It saw its role as a broker able to exploit connections with the NDP to obtain favourable legislation and did not accept responsibility for the conduct of the Government as a whole. Labour leaders did not advance the need for a legislated shorter work week with the same take-home pay to establish a powerful link between organized labour and the jobless. Nor did our leaders make the link between the untaxed superprofits of the banks and the deficit, between U.S. capital draining Canada's resources and the need for public planning to meet our own internal needs, between the cascading discrepancies in income and the need to raise the minimum wage to increase purchasing power.

Real unity can only be established by action in favour of a programme that can defend working people from the assault that will now follow the NDP's upcoming electoral defeat. We urgently need a strategy to return us to our roots and to rebuild a political movement that can be trusted by welfare recipients, women, gays, tenants, students, the old and the poor, by all those whom society seeks to marginalize and exploit. We want to win labour to power. We want a Party that is proud of its base, blue collar and white collar. The wealthy elite dominates Ontario by mobilizing its vast wealth and influence to destroy a labour Government and Party. This fundamental setback can only be overcome when we ourselves now show the same determination and tenacity in taking the only logical course open to us: building and mobilizing the solidarity of the large numbers of workers and oppressed. We need more than a legislative agenda but a rallying focus to consolidate popular power against corporate constraints. Though workers are overall worse off now than they were four years earlier, we are far from defeated. We need a leadership that will resist the pressures from the structures of capitalism to conform and that will not vacillate on our Party's fundamental positions. We need a leadership that will not hesitate to mobilize popular support.

At this juncture, the issue before Ontario workers is how the labour movement can overcome its divisions to work together to fight the ruthless offensive of corporate power. We can only ensure a positive resolution of this question by rebuilding the NDP as a party inspired by a burning vision of social solidarity truly worth winning power for. Then will our Party be restored as an historic force that can wipe away the chaos of capitalism and give birth to a socialist Ontario and a socialist Canada.



The Party's not over. Help keep socialism alive in the NDP. Contact the ONDP Left Caucus at: Box 47623, 939 Lawrence Avenue East, North York, Ontario, M3C 1P8

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(July 1994)

It is fitting to have a tribute to Vic on the 35th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution. He was a comrade and a brother. He was a comrade because he was a working class fighter for social justice in his Union and in his politics which were Trotskyism. He was a brother because he was a great humanist. He was a sensitive person and what we would call a civilized man. He grew up in Saskatchewan and he related to comrade Gord Doctorow that he had come from a rough working class background. Violent and tough. Yet he became gentle and courageous. He was influenced by the Dowson. Marie met him in Saskatchewan during the second world war years. Later on, he met Ross Dowson in Southern Ontario and met Hugh Dowson during this period as well. When he moved to Ontario which would have been in the late 1930's or the 1940's, he became a UAW worker in DeHaviland and he collaborated with Murray.

He pioneered the affiliation of his Union Local to the CCF. In a word, he lived and embodied his political principles. Later on, he became a Rubber Worker in west Toronto. Vic was a clear-minded and hard working worker-socialist. His quiet manner and his intelligent approach to the class struggle led him to associate with and influence many good trade union militants both in his local and in the broader labour movement. People like Jim Kehoe, Dave Berril and John Maharay are only a few people who have been touched by his role and inspired by his understanding.

He was patient in the Union struggles. He disapproved of mindless militancy. He had an ability to preserve the gains of the trade union and not to dissipate his union's and his class's energy in useless battles with the company, even though this left a difference of opinion with other excellent militant unionist's like John Maharay. Vic consciously remade himself. He always thought things through, controlled his emotions, became a student of trotskyist politics. He often attended Varguard Forums in the 60's and 70's during which time he was active in not only his trade union work but also in defence of the Cuban Revolution and in providing a vital link from his own generation of militants who played an active roles in the 40's and 50's with the youth radicalization and Student radicalization that came around Trotskyism during the 1960's and 70's.

One debate that he came to was a discussion between Shalom Lappin, a left zionist and myself of the Young Socialists at the Varguard Forums in the 1960's at Toronto. He took great pleasure in the way our politics were explained at that debate. Vic Hugh was a person in whom there was an integration and balance between the personal and political. From the moment that Camp Pound maker developed from an idea to provide a necessary forum for activities for a growing Trotskyist movement and youth movement in the 1960's, Vic participated actively in the project including building one of the earliest cottages and becoming a regular fixture at the camp. The hundreds of comrades who passed through the camp through the 1960's and 70's for educational activities knew Vic, who also played a role in the discussions which took place there, respected him and were frequent guests both at his cottage as well as accepted in full friendship. Vic attended all the educational activities and could be counted on to contribute, along with some members of his family, to the political activities held at the camp fully and completely.

His life was thus integrated with his politics and was at one with it. He felt most comfortable with people who shared Trotskyist ideas including many intellectuals who came around the movement during this time. However, his strong sense of reality and his rootedness in his class enabled him to make practical observations of an indispensably useful character to

many discussions which took place. Along with Ross Dowson and the other Dowson brothers and a handful of other workers who survived the decline in the Trotskyist movement in the 1950's, he provided an essential link to the new generation which had become inspired by the Cuban Revolution and international radicalization to move towards a march intorientation.

Though he was relatively inactive since his retirement approximately 10 or 15 years ago, which unfortunately coincided with a slow decline in his health and a draining of energy, he still at all times retained his sense of solidarity with the Trotskyist movement, especially the Forward Group which continued the basic ideas of the league for socialist action which he was a member of and supported and he was a frequent participant in its social and educational activities. As recently as two months ago, he attended the memorial for Ruth Bullock expressing his solidarity with the comrades of the movement and making a significant contribution to the ongoing work of Forward Group.

Though many who attended the Ruth Bullock memorial may not have been aware of it, he was already extremely ill at that time suffering from advanced cancer. Vic was a honest worker-leader. He was an honest decent and modest worker-leader. He loved his family and friends, taking great delight in his grandchildren and always faced the most adverse experiences of life with good humour and sense of optomism and courage. I do not think that in all the years that I have known Vic that I have ever heard him complain about his personal situation nor cast negative aspersions of others, even those which whom he had serious disagreements. His comrades will not forget him. We of the student radical generation were well served by Vic who talked to us and brought the experience of working people to us through his sensitivity and thoughtful perceptions. We salute our fallen comrade who suffered from a fatal cancer induced by the chemicals bosses ruthlessly employed unnecessarily and without consideration for the safety of Vic and his follow brothers in the Goodyear plant. It wasn't enough that the bosses extracted surplus value through there exploitation of workers like Vic Hugh but they also sapped the life substance out of him.

But they couldn't extract his courage and his principles he remains our inspiration and hope for the future. As a worker with confidence in the working class and as a fighter against capitalism, he remains in the tradition Joe Meslin, Ann Olson, Hugh Dowson, Murray Dowson, Reg and Ruth Bullock, Nick Oleniuk and in the living presence of Ross Dowson and his comrade. Though comrade Gord Doctorow has been unable to join us this evening to celebrate the significance of Vic's political role, he has asked me to include a personal note about Vic.

"I am deeply saddened by Vic's passing. I regret not being able to be physically present but I am present in spirit and in solidarity, Vic represented to me a warm compassionate human being who prized the future. He was always modest not because of any limitation but rather because of his insight and wisdom. He affirmed in me the belief in the working class and its future towards socialism. I send my personal condolences to his family, friends and comrades but more than that I remember his spirit of solidarity and I smile in my grief.

The Eulogy is delivered by Harry and Gord

Canadian Trotskyists were quick to emerge from the period of dormancy imposed on them by the campaign of jingoism of Canada's "war effort." By 1942 an organizational trip across Canada to renew contacts was undertaken, and before the Armistice, a 1944 national conference of Canadian Trotskyists decided on establishing an open section of the FI, the Socialist Workers League, with its paper Labour Challenge.

But with the upsurge in working class militancy at the end of World War Two, worldwide and in Canada, Ross Dowson took the lead in transforming the movement into the RWP (Revolutionary Workers Party). At this time, the CCF also had its greatest success in Federal politics, electing 28 MPs to Ottawa. Dowson ran for Mayor of Toronto and won 20% of the vote with substantial labour backing, on a Trotskyist ticket.

However, the radicalization quickly ebbed with the stabilization of the world economy. (Presumably in this period the bourgeoisie of all countries including Canada made big concessions to the labour movement to gain class peace, and begin the task of rebuilding Europe and supplying pent-up demand in other countries caused by five years of war austerity -- this is not described by Alexander, so the next rapid re-entry of the movement into the CCF seems abrupt).

By 1950 the RWP has adopted a document for entry into the CCF (getting strong encouragement no doubt from Pablo in the FI's United Secretariat.) By 1952 the RWP has been dissolved. Work apparently was confined to education and contact work inside the CCF for the next period (the McCarthy witch-hunt era in the US).

However, by 1955 the Canadian Section was expelled from the CCF, which then established itself publicly as the Socialist Education League (SEL). By December 1955 the first issues of its journal Workers Vanguard appeared.

This was also the period of an important realignment of forces in the labour movement: in 1956 the TLC and CCL had merged to form the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), and by 1958 the CLC had decided to form the New Democratic Party with the CCF. By 1961 this party was formed, a great surge forward provincially and federally for Canadian labour, resting on the important achievements of the CCF which, although never achieving power in Ottawa, forced many vital social programs and legislation protecting unions to be adopted in order that the Canadian bourgeoisie might exclude it from forming a labour government.

At this time Ross Dowson elaborated the movement's orientation to the CCF-NDP in the complete manner that we know it today (and was expressed in the 1970 document "The Socialist Vanguard -- our orientation to the NDP, as a strategy and its tactical application"). Dowson exlained the unconditional but

critical nature of this orientation, which was seen to be of along-term intervention with a no-split perspective. At the same time, the Canadian movement united the SEL in Ontario with the SIC in B.C. to form the open organization, the League for Socialist Action (LSA); a booklet entitled "What the LSA is, and What it Wants."

We can observe today that the Canadian working class had, by the end of the McCarthite period following the war, achieved the formation of the first major independent labor political party in North America. It might be said also that a by-product was a evolution of a sophisticated revolutionary movement parallel to the labour party leadership, which proclaimed for itself a federated status to the social-democratic-dominated NDP. This was of course our Canadian Trotskyist movement. Our theoretical contribution to the labour movement was this revolutionary "orientation" -- wholly revolutionary as it was, envisaging an independent left wing within the confines of the reformist party structure as a minimum, and often, as well, a public "league" carrying out public activities based on the full transitional program. Thus, our movement had made and was destined to make an essential contribution to the Canadian labour movement.

Obviously, this orientation had little in common with Pablo's understanding of entrism -- "entrism sui generis." (The Canadian section solidarized with the SWP-led International Committee faction against the IS from the beginning.)

The first expulsions from the NDP came in 1963, with 11 youth being kicked out and the OYND being dissolved as apparently hopelessly corrupted by the left. A defence booklet was published denoucing the expulsions and featuring a refusal by our comrades, leaders not only in the youth section but the party as well, to answer to the evidently false charges of being members of an opponent political party.

In this period of youth radicalization and the campaign against the war in Vietnam (Alexander does not mention all this as he omits all explanatory background information), our movement saw its most impressive expansion. By now we had grown rapidly (no figures here) and were intervening in Quebec with La Lutte Ouvriere and Jeune Garde being published by the Lique Socialiste Ouvriere in Montreal.

Subsequent events:

A Socialist Caucus was set up in 1965.

12 members of the SC were expelled in 1967

The Waffle appeared 1969 to 1973, with Laxer winning 37% of the vote in the leadership election against David Lewis.

Waffle split in 1972, was expelled from the NDP in 1973

The Forward Group splits from the LSA in 1973, publishing a document "The Subversion of our Orientation to the NDP" in January 1974.

Some general observations:

1) the permanent nature of the independent (farmer-) labour social-democratic political formation in Canada; ingrained in the consciousness of Canadian workers and their allies (though consistently "held in reserve" by the class from Federal power.)

2) the functional role and even necessity for such a mass labour party as an extension of the purely economic role of union activity, as we foresaw from our first experience in entry to the CCF and elaboration of our orientation (the CCF-NDP's political defence of unions, initiatives on extending and defending social measures) and as the school of revolutionary political action.

3) the correct nature of the Troskyist orientation to this party, as proven by the lack of survival of all political currents that attempted to ignore it, or by-pass it, or deny its functional role in the political education of Canadian workers.

3a) That the mass labour party is the necessary arena for the recruitment of revolutionary cadres, has not yet been definitively proven, is true; but this perspective remains with good reason our primary one. (We have historically recruited our membership from the NDP youth and sectoral struggles outside the NDP; but all these have not provided us with a solid base in the labour movement either.)

4) Also possible is partial defeat or serious erosion of the union movement through repressive bourgeois legislation and refusal of union leadership to take an adequate defence posture (due to their inherent class collaborationism). Likewise, the labour party can commit suicide by

a) forming multi-class coalitions, or

b) adopting fully bourgeois programs and legislative agendas which result in electoral annihilation.

Today in Ontario in the year 1995, our movement is faced with arguing the arrival of option 4(b) -- the programmatic bankruptcy of the Ontario NDP has threatened to annihilate not only the NDP in this province but wound the NDP mortally on the Federal arena.

We need to evaluate: the nature and status of the NDP across Canada today. The effect of possible disappearance of the NDP on Canadian working class (foreshadowed by the present functional absence of the party in Ottawa today.)

(Notes by T.D.)

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D R A F T

May 3, 1996

Harry Paine
586 Ellice Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 1Z8

Dear Harry:

Further to your recent letter regarding the new formation that you appear to have become involved in involving Marcel Hatch, I have been asked by the Forward Group to summarize our response as follows. I have put the points down in numbered paragraphs for ease of reference:

1. Firstly, the letter you wrote us appeared to us to be unnecessarily polemical in tone. You appear to have written to us in a hectoring, lecturing style. You should be aware that we are attempting to have an exchange of views and such a style tends to impede a full and frank discussion creating artificial barriers. Once you start being dismissive of other comrades' actions or views using rather strong language like "sectarian" to describe them, this tends to be overly dismissive. This kind of exchange is more reminiscent of an earlier period of our movement when there tended to be an overly aggressive and even "macho" style adopted by some comrades. We are therefore somewhat perplexed by the tone that you have adopted.

2. Our experience in Ontario with the labour movement appears to be quite different from your own description of the current situation. In Ontario, the Ontario Federation of Labour and other labour forces have recently mobilized the largest demonstration in the history of Ontario and perhaps of Canada explicitly based on the working class. More than 125,000 people mobilized in Hamilton, virtually closing the town down and unifying a significant section of the working class in a militant mobilization. Of course we are aware that these same union bureaucrats are the ones who promote reformist illusions and have helped to sustain the capitulationist NDP leadership and in fact encourage adaptation to the worst features of capitalism both ideologically and in practice. Notwithstanding this contradiction though, the sheer numbers alone of the above demonstration indicate a level of militancy and organization which cannot be ignored and which must be considered in developing any kind of central strategy vis-a-vis the labour movement. Indeed, the struggles of the labour

movement appear to have the potential of increasing to rise in Ontario and there has been no slack in the level of activity of the labour movement. Such activities include greater integration with social activist groups than ever in the past, mobilization of labour councils on a local level in coalitions, a growing unity behind unions like OPSEU which recently established itself as a union capable of mobilizing its membership, the growing role of women and minorities within the trade union movement, etc.

In this context, we view the role of the NDP as becoming relevant once again. In fact, we wish to draw to your attention that the head of CUPE, Syd Ryan, who has emerged as a powerful spokesman for the labour movement in the coalition against the Social Contract has endorsed the left wing Peter Kormos campaign for ONDP leadership. This shows the objective pressures having an impact on elements of the labour leadership.

Ultimately, the gains that the labour movement is fighting to defend through economic struggles can only be maintained and deepened through political action. The absence of the NDP as a fighting voice
and instrument of the labour movement continues to be the single most significant deficit of the working class both in Canada and in Ontario. Inevitably, the objective forces are and will continue to propel the organized trade union movement to once again deal with the current bourgeois offensive on the political level. Indeed, at the level of bureaucratic structures, the trade union movement has never been more integrated into the NDP that it currently is in Ontario.

You are of course mindful of our traditional appreciation that the NDP is "both in the way and on the way". The current situation clearly points out that the NDP continues to embody this contradiction and even when it is clearly "in the way", it still has features which put it "on the way".

It is our unanimous view that there are not sufficient forces organized in Canada to support a revolutionary regroupment at present. Most of the revolutionary left remains isolated or split. There have been no left areas of activity which could constitute regroupment of the revolutionary forces through the development of a common understanding and analysis. We do not foresee realistic or meaningful prospects for regroupment at this time either on a regional or national scale.

In any event, we note that the Fourth International does not appear to play any significant role in your perspective on regroupment. We adhere to the position that there can be no serious regroupment except around the Fourth International both, its program, traditions and organizations. Indeed, to

the extent that the formation you envisage has already attracted and by the nature of its program will attract people who are not part of the tradition of Trotskyism or who indeed have clear declared anti-Trotskyist positions (like Abie Weisfeld, for example), the organizational formation you propose will be politically confused. In our view, especially in light of the denouement of Stalinism, the possibilities for political clarity have never been greater. There is no alternative to our traditional view that regroupment must take place around the banner of the Fourth International, a point which is not even addressed in your statement.

8. The absence of discussions involving the Fourth International in the regroupment proposals seem to us to indicate a significant gap in our mutual understanding of what is needed in order to reconstitute the revolutionary left. Regroupment of the forces who are explicitly building a revolutionary vanguard is qualitatively different from doing anti-fraction work within the Left Caucus which is a fraction of a labour party formation. Both of these projects involve different focuses. Our Left Caucus work involves building influence within a mass movement in a hostile milieu. It is quite different from what appears to us to be a grandiose scheme for regroupment. In any event, even if you or others would seek to play a role in such a regroupment to promote the politics of the Fourth International, the question that is left begging is: why not reconstitute the revolutionary left explicitly and openly around the positions of the Fourth International? As you well know, we always rejected the "two tickets approach". The omission of the central importance of the Fourth International in the regroupment proposal strikes us as a profound rupture from our previous practice.

9. Our final point arises out of the lack of political clarity described in the paragraph immediately above. In the absence of a clear orientation to the Fourth International, we believe that one of two tendencies will inevitably prevail in this new structure. Either it will develop a dynamic against the Fourth International or it will tend to become a substitute for organizations which already exist, based in the labour movement and activist organizations that form the backbone of existing mass movements. There is no advantage to forming a group to substitute for these movements as there is also no point in reconstituting the left around an ambiguous perspective.

Comradely,

Harry Kopyto
Secretary, Forward Group

Order on Saturday AM

(Major patron of the Dawson archives)

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COFFEE AND REFRESHMENTS **ALL WELCOME**

"A communist life: Jack Scott and the Canadian Workers Movement 1927-1985"

edited by Bryan D. Palmer, 1988.

(Below is by way of a book review being an informal 1989 essay interspersed with notes, quotes & comments by J. Darling)

In the Introduction Palmer states that his life intersects with Jack Scott's at the time of Scott's attraction to Maoism in the '50s and '60s. However, despite mutual respect and many common views, Palmer reports that he and Scott differ on more important questions than they agree on – the nature of the Soviet Union, an understanding of how a communist should function under democratic-centralist discipline, the national question in Canada, etc. (but neither Scott nor Palmer go into details on these differences however.)

One concrete example of the friction between the two arose over Scott's support for the Polish Solidarnosc movement, while Palmer supported the Soviet suppression of it. Palmer sees Scott's position as "orthodox Trotskyism" for reasons he does not state. (It is true that our movement, the Forward Group, as well as the 4th International, wholeheartedly supported Solidarnosc, leading a public campaign in defense of this movement's jailed leaders in the early 1980s.)

Then, in a footnote Palmer points out that Scott's references to Trotskyism are based on our movement at the time, the LSA (League for Socialist Action) which Palmer describes as an "ostensibly Trotskyist tendency," again without any explanation – the LSA having been for some time at this period the official and uncontested section of the Fourth International, which in turn recognized the LSA's theoretical contribution to the question of a revolutionary orientation to mass labor parties (the NDP in Canada). In fact Ross Dowson spent some time working in the international centre and was instrumental in promoting the development of sister sections in New Zealand and Australia and the setting up left caucuses within both the Australian and New Zealand labor parties.) Palmer states that his views are reflected in *1917: Journal of the Bolshevik Tendency* (which the LSA judged to be ultra-leftist).

Palmer describes Scott as a worker militant, a member who never adhered to the (Stalinist) Communist Party of Canada party line, and who never apologized for it. As a result, he was always excluded from its central organs as a dissident. Yet Scott was useful to the Party as an organizer, as a hired business agent or as a middle cadre responsible for recruitment and education.

Always a thorn in the side of the Party establishment, he tells of the wild twists and turns of Stalinism, the missed opportunities and its blunders (but he never comes to grips with Stalinist ideology or draws any conclusions – until very late in the day, when he was finally expelled from the Party for taking the side of China in the Soviet-China dispute in the '50s and '60s) .

Jack Scott was born in Ireland where he was introduced to the labor movement as a dockworker in unions controlled by syndicalists (who never signed a contract – the conditions of work agreed to with the bosses were merely posted, but never signed) and all disputes were settled by strikes.

He came to Canada rather than Australia almost by accident, with his sister in 1927 (being born in 1910). In the early '30s he was involved in demonstrations of the unemployed in Quebec, and was attracted to the Communist Party.

The young Jack rode rails to Ontario, where he managed to get a magistrate to jail him & buddies in Cayuga in order to get fed and cleaned up . After landing up in Chatham, he started speaking on street corners in Windsor, getting reported in the *Border City Star* every time he spoke.

There he met Tim Buck and Malcolm Bruce, leaders of the CP of Canada (CPC). He became active in the CP-led Workers Unity League which however was suddenly disbanded by the Party as it declared that all workers were to join the AFL unions – which led to a lot of worker resistance to this forced move to join the most conservative craft unions, at a time when the CIO was beginning to make gains (Scott complains but doesn't draw any conclusions).

In other developments he mentions but does not explain why, the women's auxilliary organizations at the time were also disbanded after conflict with party leaders (again he offers no details) .

Jack tells about the On-to-Ottawa Trek of 1935: although the CPC was credited for it, in fact it started up in defiance of the Party. Scott himself walked all the way from Windsor to Ottawa holding meetings, which also involved the CCF (forerunner to the NDP). The “Trekkers” were housed in arenas and fed by local people. The police tried to escort the marchers on the highways (they had been chased off riding freight cars) but the marchers used "snake walking" to force officers off motorcycles, and being fat and unfit, they couldn't keep up with very lean and fit unemployed.

Scott next moved to work for the Party in East Toronto (he preferred to be outside Toronto where he had more freedom to operate, away from the Party tops) . He did a lot of street-corner speaking, getting crowds of a few thousand. When he got arrested a crowd gathered at the Police station where he and others were being held. One of the others was David Archer, then a left-wing CCFer.

Recurring rallies ended up in battles with police trying to break them up. Many of them, including Scott were arrested. Jack refused to swear on the Bible, getting thrown into the Don Jail (which had already been condemned for 50 years). A lot of these agitators joined the Party; very militant, but not understanding much about communism.

A large group, the East York Workers' Association, affiliated to the CCF but also containing CP members, led demonstrations, protected tenants against evictions, held big

meetings. On one occasion they broke up a big meeting with (Ontario Premier) R.B. Bennett at Maple Leaf Gardens by heckling and sitting down during God Save the King.

Jack was then sent back to Sarnia by Joe Salsberg, a CPC leader. Strikers had closed down the town. For a period he worked in a tomato-processing plant, where he was involved in a strike in London.

Shipped back to Toronto to go to Party School (and having to make his own way on the freight trains), Jack found studying Lenin in the Party way boring. He was vetoed when he wanted to go to fight in Spain, coming up against the Buck-Sam Carr leadership.

Jack left Toronto in 1938 again to pick tobacco; ended up in the Army, and had to struggle to get out of being an instructor and to get into action overseas. He was in the front lines in Germany at the end of the war. By then the war had been transformed (by the CPC leadership in hewing the Soviet line) from a reactionary war to a patriotic progressive war in defense of the Soviets. After returning home, Scott rejected the Party line that claimed a glorious new era of world cooperation and peace was dawning (and almost knocked a drunken Party leader down a flight of stairs in a violent argument). Scott describes how the Party ran candidates to defeat left CCFers in elections, and how he refused to take on Party posts. (But he remained a member.)

Out West:

In due course, Jack was shipped out to Trail, B.C. to help the CP's Mine-Mill union to win control – stepping into "Harvey Murphy' s Fiefdom" – but he first took a extended holiday on the Coast and was not active in Party for some time. Later, he surprised himself by managing somehow to get a job in the Trail smelter despite his record as a militant (his war record did the trick.) He'd hoped to get thrown out during the 90-day trial period, but no luck. He pulled a Party group together there, despite the fact most workers supported the CCF. Scott worked with left-wing CCFers, and he was the only left-wing oppositionist who got elected to the local executive.

Murphy visited the club from Vancouver and Jack relates how he threw his bureaucratic weight around. Scott was soon fired from the smelter for distributing the *Pacific Tribune (the CP's West Coast journal)* which had run a series of attacks against the company.

On to Yellowknife:

After firming up the Party group in the Trail area he was then picked by Murphy to rescue the degeneration of the union in Yellowknife, Yukon. Scott was always unhappy being in a paid union job, especially since his appointment there hadn't been approved by local union members, but he managed to beat back a company red -baiting attack successfully. He lived with his wife in a shack for a period and became a local leader.

He negotiated with the mining companies who had a problem of disappearing labor. Scott managed to consolidate the two locals and enable them to win concessions in living conditions which the companies had total control over.

Finally Jack decided he had had enough of Arctic isolation and after a series of union negotiations announced he was leaving in the face of furious opposition of Party leaders and the Mine-Mill union czar Murray. *(See the chapter: "The Reds beat themselves: Communists and Unions in B.C. in the early 1950s")*

Arriving in Vancouver, Scott was sent by the Party to work in a shipyard, where he was shifted around endlessly and couldn't get any seniority. He didn't get back into Party work and opposed the party on the question of automatic checkoff of union dues. Scott preferred a voluntary worker agreement to have dues checked off, and challenged Murphy and national leader Kashtan & Leslie Morris on this issue.

Later Scott was labeled as a "goddamned Trotskyite" by Harvey Murphy because Jack challenged him for never paying party club dues in Vancouver. Scott then goes on to describe how the CP caused its own decline for initiating a split in the IWA *(International Woodworkers union)* which it controlled. The party decided to break the Canadian Woodworkers from the International, not with the agreement of the membership but by bureaucratic ukase.

Scott's telling of this episode resulting in the destruction of the Canadian Woodworkers union is confusing, since he omits to situate this event in the context of the postwar witch-hunt. His reminiscences are rather sketchy so it is hard to trace the details of the events he describes – which is one problem of this kind of "history" though it does have the advantage of spontaneity.

Scott was often in direct conflict with the Party on questions of trade union strategy (mainly around lack of consultation with the rank and file) . For this he was eventually squeezed out of the Boilermakers' Union, ending his career as a unionist, and took a contract job maintaining a party hall, the Pender Auditorium in Vancouver, as a handyman. It was by now the mid-50s, and Jack reports that Milton Acorn started writing poems in the balcony of the hall.

In this period Scott barely maintained Party membership. At the time of Kruschev's revelations about Stalin's crimes, the Canadian CP delegates to the congress apparently weren't informed, and they denied Khruschev's "revelations" when they got back to Canada (not knowing about the reports in the *New York Times* . Scott however became re-activated in the CP (in the freer and easier atmosphere in Vancouver probably) and took part in some of the revolts in the CPC over the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1957. (No mention of East Germany, Poland, or Hungary, however. . .)

Exit from the Party:

Jack started hanging out with left-CCFers and some people with "Trotskyist ideas" in the Vancouver area like Jerry Lebourdais. He got involved in the CCF (which became the NDP by 1961) Left Caucus around the anti-Vietnam war movement, and the Socialist Caucus Bulletin, as well as associating more broadly with our movement (the LSA in Vancouver), which included Ernie Tate. At one point however, when Scott wanted to condemn the Longshoremen for not refusing to load helicopter parts for Vietnam, Tate (and the LSA) allegedly opposing this (reflecting a different tactical approach, the LSA looking to build union links.)

However Scott did win the battle of recruiting the left unionists in B.C. (probably due to the overwhelming student youth makeup of the LSA) Even as Scott was moving away from the CP, he reports: "...after a period of time of knowing these people (Ernie Tate, the Socialist Caucus, and the LSA) – one day Lebourdais came to me and he said 'I've decided I'm going to quit the CCF I want to join the Party.'" (Page 142) "I said, 'Jerry, I don't think it's what you want. Think about it a bit before you do. In any event, don't quit the CCF...' "Then, to solve the problem, Scott talked to the appropriate CPer and they were accepted as members in a "security club," being CCFers and Scott's associates, "which means the rest of the CP don't even know they're members – they have their own isolated life as a club apart from the CP."

Scott says there were 30 left unionists, still in the CCF, inside this security club. They sought union strategy advice from the CP but Scott says they got bad advice, such as in the case of one BC oil workers union local which wanted to strike alone and not wait out the company, which could easily win the strike against a single local. Nobody in the Party had the union savvy to offer correct advice, says Scott.

There are many funny and interesting anecdotes. . . like the case of the leading CPer who demanded to be on B.C. delegation to visit Cuba (which we Trotskyists were organizing) , and when he was refused declared: "Wait till we (the Stalinists) take over in Cuba. "

Scott himself became a member of the NDP through Jerry Lebourdais (he was astounded by their laxity in B.C.) --and this was by way to get him into the CP's Security Club (all the while the CP tops didn't even know about it.)

Scott relates a joint action on a leaflet with the LSA, and Tate agreeing to Scott writing a leaflet against government trusteeship of (SIU president) Banks's corrupt Seamen's International Union; a position which was won unanimously in the BC Federation of Labor, but in defiance of the Party line. All this time CP leader Leslie Caron was trying to get Scott to resign from the Party.

There are stories about (Scott's) guerrilla actions against the CP, and being active in the Socialist Caucus with "two or three Trotskyist factions fighting one another".

At this time, Scott and his associates took China's side in the Moscow-Peking dispute (without apparently bothering about the politics of the dispute, as the Trotskyist movement did very seriously) . He decided to set up a China Friendship Association in Oct. 1963. A meeting of 60 set it going with Lebourdais as President and Scott as V-P. Said CP leader Caron: "I see Comrade Scott you've decided to set up an alternate central committee." Caron said that the CP would have opposed the committee if it had been asked, but were not demanding its dissolution at this time.

Scott and the CP “Security Club” wrote a series of *Viewpoint* newsletters criticizing the Party not so much on China as on the popular-front strategy and tactics of the CP in Canada, such as slogan "put monopoly under the democratic public control".

Palmer relates that Scott had lost faith in the CP as a banner of socialism, with the exposure of Stalin's crimes; what he wanted to do was keep the banner alive. CP leader Kashtan made a trip to Vancouver to try to convince the club to join the CP, but after being grilled for 15 minutes, left to catch a plane back to Toronto – this life-long bureaucrat just didn't cut the mustard with Scott's left-unionist workers.

Shortly after, the CP simply dissolved the “Security Club” after Scott sided with China against the Party leadership's desire to defend the CP of India against China. Formal charges of failure to carry out a Party order were laid against him, but no trial, only a hearing before the Executive and not the Party club, which happened to be contrary to the CPC constitution.

Progressive Worker

Soon after this Scott was also expelled from the NDP. His group traveled across Canada to try to set up an organization in which they could be active. They wanted it to be a cross-Canada, not a B.C. or a regional organization but were unable to pull anything together in Ontario. He set up PW with Jerry Lebourdais, known as a leading unionist in B.C. printing their paper on their own press by October 1994. (Joe) Hendsbee and Roger Perkins came around PW in Ontario, but they were more of a hindrance than a help, according to Scott. PW grew rapidly for a time and found wealthy donors to finance the movement and their press. In fact they soon outsold *Pacific Tribune (the CP West Coast journal).*

A realist, Scott resisted forming a party, PW being still only regional. Another Maoist current, the Workers' Communist Party existed, but it had nothing outside of Montreal. WCP sold papers to China but never received more than subscription value plus air freight costs from China, unlike the CP whose press was heavily subsidized by the Soviets.

PW developed relations in groups in the US West. Scott had to resist a lot of US ultra-left crackpot demands for guns, etc.; also, harassment from groups like the Trotskyist Spartacus League condemning the Vietnamese for not fighting the Americans to the death, and for selling out by seeking peace negotiations.

Scott did a lot of cross-Canada speaking tours with a film on China, and while successful in raising money could not succeed in organizing PW in other parts of Canada.

He describes a large anti-Vietnam war demo in Vancouver in conjunction with our movement (the LSA/YS), with PW carrying flags of Vietnamese with guns, and insisting on forcing their way down Granville Street despite an agreement with the police to use another street, which our movement and the coalition had agreed to.

When Scott was invited to speak to outside meetings on the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia; he warned that the CP's Nigel Morgan wouldn't speak as scheduled if Scott was speaking (and that's how it turned out.) PW got a good response but nobody joined – such as a Native Indian group that asked PW to give them a Marxist appreciation of their Native history. PW built up a good proletarian and coffee-house lifestyle and milieu, but as the labor movement demobilized in the later 60s, so PW declined rapidly as well.

At this point Scott refers to a conflict with Ernie Tate of our movement (*the League for Socialist Action*), in the conduct of a Teamsters strike in which PW intervened and got themselves all arrested. Apparently Tate tried to sue PW for revealing his Trotskyist politics and endangering his job. This was how PW supported strike action; by joining picket lines of actions in progress. But PW supported another Trotskyist, George Brown, who was leading an endangered strike against Lenkurt. When Brown was fired and led the breakaway Canadian workers organised into a union to represent the workers in the plant. PW helped support him in what Scott saw as the beginning of the extensive independent union movement in B.C.

Scott was a militant unionist but not a classic ultra-left or romantic. He recognized that an isolated Oil Workers local in B.C. that had engaged in a sit-down strike was doomed to defeat, and set about in extricating the strikers from their untenable position. Scott got the strikers wives to picket the refinery for a few days, then got the men to come out and "join the picket line," thus extricating themselves from the occupation of the plant without losing face. In the ensuing battle only two unionists lost their jobs, one of whom was Lebourdais, who Scott told: "It's not like Detroit in the 1930 ' s . . . " (page 182)

Canada-China Friendship Assocation

As soon as it was set up Scott withdrew to lessen flak from the CP. They sponsored well-known speakers like Felix Green who brought a film to Vancouver which packed them in. They popularized the Chinese revolution – thus during the period of the "Cultural Revolution" which was really a purge, almost a *coup-d'état*, by Mao against the majority in the Chinese CP opposed to him because of economic policy, and after the big defeat of the Indonesian CP. (Scott does not concern himself with politics in China. See the 4th International documents by Peng Shu-tse, the Trotskyist veteran of the early Chinese CP) . PW battled the influential Kuomintang (the forces of Shiang Kai Shek), still strong in BC, and recruited influential liberal academics to defend China, as well as

sponsoring a tour by the first Chinese ambassador, in B.C. (the NDP was in power at this time).

Witness to the Cultural Revolution:

Scott insisted he be invited to visit China from the All China Federation of Trade Unions (which didn't exist any more, wiped out already by Mao, as he found out in China) . Scott wanted the freedom to meet the Chinese people, not be restricted to official tours. Much of China was paralyzed, with fighting going on between groups of the Red Guard. A lot of reluctant young people and students were working in rural areas. He asked a lot of questions and got back unsatisfactory answers. He was in Peking for May Day and witness what he qualified as a near-hysterical night rally for Mao.

Scott met various Red Guard groups, students and workers and was eagerly asked about the outside world (China had been totally cut off). Scott says he was torn two ways with what he saw and heard about the Cultural Revolution – mostly he did not understand what was going on about the public humiliation of those called "capitalist roaders."

Scott visited China again in the 70s with his wife who was in ill health and actually died during their trip there. He asked a lot of questions about the obvious differences of wealth, about how factories worked (why working conditions were so poor, about frequent piece-work payment), in school classes and universities about their view of Stalin.

Finally Scott reviewed the other Maoist groups (in Canada) – the life of Hardial Bains who historian Avakumovic falsely says came from PW; how Bain's CPC-ML turned violent when dealing with ex-members, and how many CPC-MLers used violence in their relations with other radicals. Horror stories about the *People's Canada Daily News*. He comments about (the tendency) “In Struggle” (“En Lutte” in Quebec), the more attractive wing of WCP because of its support of Quebec independence and tie-in with the FLQ, the Quebec terrorist movement.

During the FLQ crisis *(Front de Libération du Québec: see La Lutte Ouvrière)* and Canadian army occupation of Quebec, our movement (the LSA) boycotted Scott's group's campaign to disrupt Federal Liberal leader Turner from speaking at UBC under the slogan "No free speech for Quebec, no free speech for Turner." They succeeded in breaking up the meeting. In later months, Scott got mixed up with all the Maoist tendencies in B.C. and across Canada, at one point mediating between factions of “In Struggle” in Halifax, and in Montreal where he attended a conference of 2, 000.

Finally Scott got exhausted and decided to "quit politics" in 1977. He started writing labour history for his publisher New Star, entering public debates with academics. He wrote “Sweat and Struggle” as a first attempt at Canadian labour history, really just a draft and never reprinted. He wrote on Gompersism *(craft union chief Gompers, icon of conservative backroom contract deals “business unionism”)* in the AFL, labor in Latin

America, the AFL's role in Vietnam. His titles were: “Canadian workers, American Unions” and “Yankee Unions Go Home!”

Right-wing historian John Crispo blocked Scott from getting a Canada Council grant to write on the national question and American economic domination, with the result that most of his material was never published and is now in UBC archives.

Scott helped operate a radical bookstore in Vancouver – Spartacus Books – but had to fight off Trotskyists attempting to take it over, including Gary Cristall. Scott tells about some of the leading personalities in the CPC like Tim Buck and Stanley Ryerson, as well as Malcolm Bruce who Scott says quit the LSA in Vancouver and joined PW although he was never active in PW (the LSA purportedly hushed this up.)

Scott made a last trip to China in 1984. By then trade unions were back in existence, though operating more as "company unions" involved in promoting production, with big bonus systems, good work attitudes, and urging peasants to get into commerce, handicrafts and textiles. Workers had then an 8-hour day, but worked 6 full days, and with a full hour for lunch, with a 20-minute break in morning and afternoon, making a work day almost 9-1/2 hours long, plus travel to and from. (Veteran Trotskyist Peng Shu-Tse confirms this point and gives an in-depth description of Mao's humiliating exploitation of the Chinese peasant during the campaign to form Communes.)

The Chinese CP has let lapse millions of memberships gained during the Cultural Revolution, and is now openly boasting it is recruiting among educated, upper class Chinese.

A Communist Life:

Scott concludes by saying that if he had his life to live again, he would not join the Communist Party again – he'd look for something different. Even as he remained active as a more and more isolated but respected individual until the end of his life, not bitter but unable to explain his dilemma and the bankruptcy of the movement he gave his life to, he observes that politics should be based on the needs of workers in this country, not the needs of the Soviet Union or China.

He notes that "even the Trotskyists in B.C. seem to have folded up their tents" and left for Central Canada. He holds almost a comradely concern for the decline of the whole left, including Trotskyists – quite unique among lifelong Stalinists; but then he was not a lifelong Stalinist, he was a "fellow-traveller" who followed the line of least theoretical resistance (a very Canadian, particularly Anglo-Saxon pragmatist trait) and never drew the lessons of his life and observations.

The significance of Jack Scott's life for us is this: he represents a generation of union militants who could have provided the vital link of the student radicalization of the 1960s to the working class, a layer which alone could have given it a long-term class perspective (how to work in the unions, how to relate to the class and become an integral

part of the class, as Lenin would have demanded.)

The fact that Scott himself was hounded out of his own class as a worker and leader, despite a career as an effective radical union militant (independently of the Stalinist misdirection of his own party) is indicative of the conditions which prevented Trotskyist radicals from making a more profound link within the mass workers' movement and thereby integrating their own movement into the working class . What the Trotskyist movement required to sustain itself was a whole layer of older worker militants to provide the perspective and the link – men and women like Scott and Jean-Marie Bedard, Paddy Stanton, Joyce Rosenthal and of course Ross Dowson, had they lived longer and in turn been sustained by their impressive cohort of the '30s and '40s, would have been in our position to decisively influence the sudden blooming of our student-based movement of the 60s and 70s.

Thus, Scott's life and his biography illuminate the period and the problem of building a revolutionary vanguard in Canada.

60 Years of the 4th International

International Viewpoint #307 January 1999

Charlie van Gelderen is the last living participant from the Fourth International's founding conference in 1938. To mark the 60th anniversary of the organization, he gave the following speech to the 1998 Fourth International Youth Camp in Denmark.

In September 1938, I was privileged to attend the Founding Conference of the Fourth International as an observer from the Fourth International Organization of South Africa.

It was not accidental that the conference took place at that historical moment. The beginning of the second world war was a year ahead, but its threat was looming over Europe. The international labour movement was in total disarray, its Stalinist and social democratic leaderships unable and unwilling to organize working class resistance to the coming catastrophe. Far from resisting the war, they were, in fact, vigorously at work mobilizing the masses for enthusiastic support of the war.

Security

It was against this background that the thirty delegates met in Paris that September. (It is often stated that the founding conference took place in Switzerland. This was for security reasons.) We had very real reasons to fear the activities of both the police of the bourgeois states and the secret agents of the Stalinist regime, the GPU. Rudolf Klement, the secretary of the organizing committee was, in fact, abducted and assassinated on the eve of the conference. The conference itself was penetrated by a GPU agent, known to us as Etienne, who attended as the Russian delegate. His real name was Mark Zborowski, and he had wormed his way into the confidences of Trotsky's son, Sedov.

When I look back, I am appalled at the almost complete lack of security. Paris seemed to be swarming with members of the youth organization of the American section. They were all aware that the conference was taking place, and were frequenting cafes with delegates. It was in this atmosphere that the man who was to drive an ice pick into the brain of Leon Trotsky years later, known to us then as Jacson, a Belgian sports journalist, was able to enter into a relationship with Sylvia Ageloff, one of the young American comrades who were in Paris simply to have a good time. He was, of course, a GPU agent, a Spaniard, Ramon Mercader. I saw a great deal of him and he was, apparently, not at all interested in politics. He seemed to have plenty of money, which he spent freely.

Patriotism

The conduct of the leaderships of the Second and Third (Communist) Internationals in those fateful months leading up to World War II, was even more craven than that of the Second International in 1914.

All the important parties of the Second International – the German, the French and the British Labour Party formed a "civil peace" with their respective capitalist class, once war actually broke out. But, before hostilities began in August 1914, they at least made noises, deceiving the masses that they were trying to stop the threatening catastrophe. They met in Brussels, to discuss what could be done to mobilize the workers, half-heartedly, it is true, and completely without conviction.

Noske and Ebert were waiting breathlessly to join their compatriots in singing "Deutschland, Deutschland Uber Alles". In Britain Henderson was waiting to join the War Cabinet. But even these hypocritical gestures were missing in September 1938. There was no meeting of the Bureau of the Socialist International to discuss possible action. When British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, departed for his meeting with Hitler, Mussolini and Daladier to sign the Munich Agreement, the Labour leader, Major Clement Atlee, wished him "God speed".

The leadership of the Third International differed from that of the Second only in their more rabid patriotic zeal. They called for an immediate holy war of the Democracies against the Dictatorships. In Britain, the Communist Party organized demonstrations condemning Chamberlain for not immediately declaring war against Hitler. Even in Ireland, the so-called Communists were calling on all good Irishmen to rally in defence of British democracy

.

A radical break

It is in these circumstances, with the complete absence of revolutionary internationalist leadership from the two existing Internationals – leaderships which had become, in fact, counter-revolutionary, that the Trotskyists called for a new International, the Fourth International.

Trotsky had already condemned the Comintern as dead in 1933 when the German Communist Party, the strongest section of the Third International, which had won six million votes in the last general elections, failed to organize any working class resistance to Hitler's seizure of power.

The Social Democrats, with the support of more than 12 million votes, like the CP, surrendered without firing a shot. Together, in a United Front, they could have stopped Hitler. There would have been no war, no concentration camps, no holocaust.

The historic conditions of the day were crying out for a new international, a new revolutionary general command for the workers and the oppressed people of the world. It was in these conditions that, urged on by Trotsky, we launched the Fourth International.

Now, sixty years later, we can look back and ask ourselves, were we right? Or were people like Isaac Deutscher right, who thought it was premature and that there were still possibilities to work inside the Comintern? These questions have returned to us throughout our history, and I will return to them later.

The transitional idea

The main task of the Founding Conference was to adopt the programme *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International,* perhaps better known as the “Transitional Programme”

Trotsky, exiled in Mexico, was unable to attend the Founding Conference, but in the Spring of 1938, he prepared the draft of the “Transitional Programme,” which was discussed in all sections of the International Communist League, the precursor of the Fourth International. He considered its adoption the "most capital conquest" of the revolutionary movement since Lenin's time, perhaps a rather exaggerated claim, but its importance must not be underestimated.

The significance of the “Transitional Programme” must not be judged by a pedantic study of its texts. Many of its demands are no longer relevant but this is also true, of course, of the last section of the *Communist Manifesto*. It in no way diminishes its historic importance. Those who come fresh to the document will probably be surprised how fresh and modern much of it still is.

The “Programme” made a thorough and rounded analysis of the period in which it was launched. It presented to the international working class, to the peasants, the poor and oppressed in the colonial countries and to the revolutionary core of Bolsheviks fighting the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, a programme for immediate action on all the pressing problems of life and struggle which confronted them.

It differed from previous programmes because of its transitional approach. The programme of the Second International was divided into two parts, independent of each other. The minimum programme "limited itself to reforms within bourgeois society" and the maximum programme promised "socialism in the indefinite future". There was no bridge between the minimum and the maximum programmes. Socialism was mentioned only in passing at May Day rallies.

The same approach lay behind the Stalinist revisionist theory of a "two-stage revolution": first the struggle for democracy then -- but when? – on to socialism. The latest example of this is the strategy of the South African Communist Party during the transition from apartheid to "non-racial" capitalism and parliamentary democracy.

The “Transitional Programme” takes the struggle from where it is, from the concrete consciousness of the working class today to the conquest of power and socialism. It lived up to the prescription laid down by Rosa Luxemburg:

"Our whole programme would be a miserable scrap of paper if it were not capable of serving us for all eventualities and in every moment of the struggle, and to serve us by virtue of it being practised and not by its being shelved. If our programme is the historical formulation of the historical development of society from capitalism to socialism, then obviously it must formulate also the transitional phases of this development.

"It must contain them in their fundamental features and therefore also be able to indicate to the proletariat the corresponding attitude in the sense of approaching closer to socialism in every given moment. From this it follows that for the proletariat there cannot be, in general, a single moment when it would be compelled to leave its programme in the lurch, or in which it could be left in the lurch by its programme."

Rosa Luxemburg would have approved of Trotsky's “Transitional Programme.”

In 1999 - time for revolution

In Britain we now have the Labour Party in power with the biggest majority a government party has ever enjoyed. In France we have a so-called Socialist government. But, far from advancing toward socialism, they are busy dismantling even the nationalized enterprises still extant and embracing the "free market" with even greater enthusiasm than their right-wing predecessors in office. They have even left large chunks of their own reformist programmes in the lurch.

The Stalinized Communist Parties of China and Vietnam are travelling at breakneck speed in the same direction. The Stalinist distortion of the workers' state has been overcome by its own contradictions and the Utopian illusion of building "socialism in one country".

The starting point of the “Transitional Programme” is that the economic prerequisites for a socialist revolution have already, in general, been achieved. True, capitalism is still turning out new inventions and higher levels of technology. It has spread its tentacles into every corner of the globe, as Marx and Engels predicted in the *Communist Manifesto,* 150 years ago. But this has not filled the bellies of the starving masses in the so-called developing world.

Financial crisis is still an unavoidable feature of capitalism. There really is no way out for the capitalist class. This was true in 1938, when the Fourth International was founded, as it is today. The historical conditions for socialism have not only ripened but, in the words of the “Transitional Programme,” they "have begun to get somewhat rotten.”

Old demands..

As I said earlier, people who come fresh to the “Transitional Programme” will find that many of its prescriptions for the ills which afflict society are still valid. What the “Programme” describes as the two basic economic afflictions which summarize the increasing absurdity of the capitalist system; unemployment and high prices, are still very much with us.

As then, so today, we demand the right to work and decent living conditions for everyone, not only in the industrialized countries but also in the deprived underdeveloped

lands. We want to see an end to the pictures of children starving in famine conditions while in Europe and America the cold storage units are overfilled with carcasses of meat and farmers are encouraged not to produce with heavy subsidies.

To combat the ever rising prices, the 1938 Programme raised the slogan of a sliding scale of wages. This means that collective agreements should assure an automatic rise in wages, in relation to the increase in consumer goods. This is a slogan which we could well use today and to which we would add that state pensions also should be pegged to the rising cost of living.

Today we have millions of working class families where no one has been in a job for years. The working class cannot permit an increase of chronically unemployed paupers. In Europe we have over 20 million unemployed and the weekly hours for those still at work is rising. In the United States, where in 1950 corporation executives were 30 to 40 times higher paid than the average of their employees, by 1990 this had increased to 140 times higher.

In the so-called developing countries, the workless total uncountable millions, forcing the youth into prostitution and making families dependent on child labour. These basic facts make some of the demands of the “Transitional Programme” very relevant.

As in 1938, the demand for a progrgmme of public works and a sliding scale of working hours should be in the programme of demands of every trade union. The bosses vote themselves fat cat salary increases and bonus shares. In Britain, the directors of the privatized Yorkshire Water, despite the droughts of the last years and record complaints from the consumers, have voted themselves pay increases of 40 per cent. The workers who make the flow of water possible, are limited to pay increases of 5 per cent.

The merchant bankers, Goldman Sachs have voted to sell off the company. Each of the 190 full partners will make at least £50 million from the deal - without putting in any extra hours of work. Yet they insist that giving in to the demands of the workers for a bigger share of the wealth which they produce with their labour would not be possible; that it would lead to increased unemployment and bankruptcies. To this the workers must raise again the demand put forward in the “Transitional Programme:” Let us have a look at the books!

...and new demands

Of course, the “Transitional Programme,” drafted in 1938, must be brought up-to-date, to meet the conditions of today and related to the current consciousness of the workers and the oppressed. But its methodology is as relevant as ever. I refer you again to the quotation from Marx with which I began. While we make our own history we can only do so "under circumstances directly encountered..."

In 1938, the most immediate dangers facing the world were imperialism, fascism and war. While these will remain dangers as long as capitalism lasts, a revised “Transitional Programme” would embrace the issues of women and gay rights and the environment.

We must demand the abolition of the international debts of the impoverished countries of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America.

Capital, in its mad rush for profit is fast destroying the earth's resources, regardless of the cost in human life which this entails.

Marginalisation

Why, if the programme adopted at the Founding Conference was so correct, why did the Fourth International not develop into a powerful organization? Why did it not succeed in planting itself deep into the working class movement? What has been its role and its influence in the 60 years since it was founded? Of course, we do not claim infallibility, we were certainly not always right. We have to admit that in the sixty years since it was founded, the Fourth International has not succeeded in implanting itself deeply in the mass movement. It is impossible, in the space available, to go into all the reasons for this and others will find different explanations.

We knew war was coming but it came less than a year later -- before we could make any real impact. The working class had experienced a series of defeats — Germany, Spain, Austria. In the Soviet Union, what remained of the Bolshevik cadres who made the October revolution had been physically annihilated.

Thanks to the revisionist Marxism of the Stalinists and the social-patriotic doctrines of the reformists, the struggle against fascism was transformed into support for war against Germany. For the Stalinist parties, of course, this changed after the signing of the Stalin-Hitler pact.

We were rowing against the stream. Our tiny forces could not effectively counter the mas-produced propaganda of the Stalinist and social democratic bureaucracies. And, of course, in a period when the working class was in retreat, there were many in our ranks and on the periphery of our movement, who could not stand up to this; who identified the years of reaction as the conclusive defeat of the revolution. (We see the same symptoms today, with the apparent triumph of the so-called free market, which has even been described as "the end of history").

The assassination of Trotsky was also a powerful blow. His leadership at that time was crucial and irreplaceable. Like Trotsky, we expected that, however the war started, the Soviet Union would inevitably be involved. And that, whatever the outcome, the Stalinist bureaucracy would collapse. In the event, the military victory of the Red Army strengthened Stalin's grip and gave him renewed prestige. This led to increased despondency in our ranks and to people seeking alternative programmes — even to desertions to Stalinism and to bourgeois democracy.

I again return to the question: Were we right to launch the Fourth International when we did and what has it accomplished? Let us look at the nature of the historic period in which we took the decision. What were our targets? The objective conditions were revolutionary, but the working class, the proletariat who was to be the instrument of the revolution, was ideologically backward and tethered to Stalinism and reformism.

Our programme, the "Transitional Programme," laid down a line of action which would free the working class from these chains and lead them into battle with slogans and demands that corresponded to the objective reality. Above all it aimed to restore the class independence of the working class, to tear them away from the ideology which tied them to the bourgeoisie.

Sectarianism

For reasons which I have already mentioned - the swift approach of the war, which transformed the anti-fascism of the workers in the bourgeois democratic countries into a patriotic war against Germany (a line vigorously endorsed by the Stalinist parties until the signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact and to which they returned with renewed enthusiasm after the invasion of the Soviet Union), we were unable to make any real impact.

But we cannot take refuge in blaming the objective conditions. While our activities are circumscribed by the circumstances in which we find ourselves, human beings do make their own history. We believed, with Trotsky, that the collapse of the bureaucratic Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union would place the Fourth International in a favourable place to give the proletariat renewed revolutionary Marxist leadership.

Perhaps, and I emphasize perhaps, if we had a strong leadership and a united international we could have made some impact on the remaining revolutionary cadres in the Soviet Union when the regime began to unravel in the period since 1989. Many of them did turn to the writings of Trotsky as they became available. In addition to Trotsky's works, the Fourth International had made valuable theoretical contributions to Marxism. But, instead of being confronted with a united Fourth International, they found themselves facing a dozen disparate grouplets all claiming to be the authentic voice of Trotskyism. Sectarian splits have been a chronic ailment in our movement. Minorities, instead of remaining inside the international and fighting for their positions, split off on the slightest pretext, believing themselves to be more Trotskyist than Trotsky, to form tiny sects, impotent and without any future. *(However, in the case of the split of the Canadian Forward Group in 1974, Van Gelderen completely ignores the role of FI leader Ernest Mandel, who intervened by denouncing the leadership of the Canadian section – see the document of this precedented action on this website: "The Subversion of the revolutionary socialist orientation to the N.D.P., pp.50-72 –Web Ed.)*

How different to Trotsky, who persisted in his adherence to the Third International till 1933 and the utter defeat of the German working class.

The future

Our International is not dead or dying. In these dark days of defeat and betrayal we have kept aloft the banner of revolutionary Marxism. The working class, the oppressed peoples of the world will not for ever bear the crushing burdens of unemployment, poverty and repression which is their lot under capitalism. For capitalism there is no way out.

Even as I write, the signs of a new economic decline are evident. The liberal economists talk of "down-sizing", "reorganizing production" and "layoffs". These are euphemisms for the sack (firing workers). There is an ever-decreasing expenditure, in real terms, on the social and health services. The homeless are still living in the streets. The only expenditure which has increased is in preparation for the next war.

Only the workers of the world and their allies in the underdeveloped countries can put an end to this madness. For that they need international leadership and a program which will give a revolutionary impulse to the struggle. I believe the “Transitional Programme” of the Fl, brought up to date, can give that leadership.

During 1999 we will present a range of viewpoints on the history of the revolutionary socialist movement, eyewitness reports from key moments, and original documents. For a full list of upcoming texts, write or e-mail us!

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."
Karl Marx: *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*

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IN DEFENCE OF THE L.S.A. c.1973

Against the attacks of Mandel and the F.I. and the apologies of Hansen and the S.W.P.

Part 1a: The F.I. and S.W.P. condemnation of Canadian Trotskyist politics
by J. Darling (Forward Group)

Including: A further selection of prior and subsequent SWP-IIDB documents on this issue
The legacy of Ernest Mandel to the Fourth International (writings)

Part 1b: International Information Bulletin (IIB Vol. X No. 12 - July 1973)
Extract: The SWP (Hansen) apologizes to Mandel/Germain for the 'mistakes' of the Canadian Section of the Fourth Interntional - "Dragon Hunting in the North"

Part 2: Counter-documents to the F.I. majority *(a selection)*

A) On the Orientation of the Fourth International in Europe
by seven movement leaders of the F.I. Minority

Including: "In Reply to Comrade Frazer, by R. Crandall, 1967

B) The New Zealand Trotskyists and the protest movement against the war in Vietnam
by George Fyson

PART 1a:

THE F.I.* AND SWP CONDEMNATION OF CANADIAN TROTSKY1ST POLITICS (**The dubious effect of the European F.I. "internationalism" on the Canadian Section)

**(Fourth International, based in Paris and Brussels)*
***(Socialist Workers Party, based in New York)*

(Submitted to Forward Group, Toronto in 1999, expanded Sept. 2016 by John Darling)

1. A poisoned defence of the Canadian LSA/LSO against FI slanders

Any future historian of the Canadian Trotskyist movement, the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière, in dealing with the its blowup with multiple splits and realignments in the early 1970s, will find interesting clues as to the impetus behind these crises, in large part due to sudden appearance of ultraleft currents emanating from the International on the one hand, and on the other hand the direct attacks leveled by the International itself against the Canadian movement's longstanding strategic analysis of the politics of the Canadian socialist revolution.

However, the “coup de grace” leading to the split of the Forward Group in 1974 took the form the "defense" of the Canadian section by the SWP, in the person of one of its veteran central leaders (Joseph Hansen), which attempted to gloss over the profound political questions facing the Canadian section by offering apologies for alleged political shortcomings and mistakes by the LSA/LSO. Thus, the Canadian section of the FI was faced not only with a devastating broadside from Germain (Mandel) but as well, gratuitous pleas of guilt from SWP leader Hansen – a double-barreled salvo that utterly unhinged the Canadian section, causing its newly-installed young leadership to protest in desperation. In doing so, the LSA/LSO leadership saw fit to suspend its obligation to conduct any normal discussion on its proposals to revise many key theoretical and strategic concepts, the very basis of the success of the Canadian movement over several decades.

This suspension of Bolshevik norms of democratic centralism by the LSA/LSO in dealing with ultraleft pressures from outside the movement, largely student elements which claimed the support of the FI, along with approbation by the leadership of the SWP, led directly to the forced split by forces around Ross Dowson in order to retain the program of the movement. All possibility of defending the long-established LSA/LSO program – outside of volumes of documents written by Dowson and his supporters, on the record – was rendered impossible in a highly factional and personalized atmosphere, dictating the setting up of first the United Tendency and a separate Socialist League/Forward Group.

However, the actions of Hansen's “defense” of the SWP's co-thinkers in Canada displayed either an ignorance of Canadian politics or a deliberate misrepresentation of it's politics, frontally disputed – politics long presented and argued, on the public record, in its four publications, from 1955, Workers' Vanguard/Labor Challenge, La Lutte Ouvrière/Libération, Young Socialist/Jeune Garde – politics publicly read and debated, presumably as well at the time by the leaders of the FI and SWP – sealed the fate of the Canadian section by their condemnation or by guilty pleas – of the LSA's new youthful leadership in 1972-3 – a spectacular display of throwing the FI's massive authority precipitously into key areas of the Canadian section's central politics. We can only hope and trust that future histories of the FI acknowledge this unprecedented salvage operation and grace the world revolutionary cadres with a suitable explanation.

While we of the Canadian section had always trusted and looked up to our co-thinkers of the SWP, it is evident in hindsight that our trust and admiration was misplaced, not only toward comrade Hansen but of the SWP leadership as a whole, which was thus revealed as obviously understanding little of the Canadian section's politics – or so pretending to – for factional reasons relating to dealing with the severe political crisis within the FI.

We Canadian revolutionaries would today protest this apparent evaluation of Canada as expendable in international FI circles – the LSA/LSO judged perhaps as a backwater whose policies and orientation weighed little in the balance of larger nations or blocks of large nations (i.e. the veteran European sections, or indeed within the FI's newly adopted amalgam, those sections of Latin America corralled into swinging behind the Maitan-Mandel prescriptions for the entire continent – albeit with several authoritative national FI sections objecting, from leading veterans of combat in several countries! (Moreno and Blanco to name but two).

In fact we would argue that Canadian labor politics looms larger than generally perceived in the North American socialist revolution, due to the Canadian achievement of unique independent farmer-labor political action (the CCF-NDP) which is also destined to play the role of example and precedent to the American

working class – that mighty force which has not yet undertaken its first key step into independent labor politics, either by establishing a labor or a socialist party based on independent proletarian support).

In fact, the future leap of American workers and oppressed sectors into independent labor political action will very likely sympathetically embrace Canadian nationalist sentiment as anti-imperialist – understood not at all as chauvinist or "bourgeois" in any way – our American brothers and sisters not failing to understand this critique of US imperialism – widely shared by the Left in Canada – as anti-American.

2. The SWP attempts to "explain" the error of the LSA/LSO's ways

The above critiques of the FI and the SWP result from a reading of the documents of the era. Of special note – coming from the SWP with which our movement had very close and fraternal attachment – International Internal Discussion Bulletin (IIB Vol. X No.12 of July 1973 which features an extended polemic against FI leaders Maitan and Germain (Mandel) by Joseph Hansen entitled "The Underlying Differences in Method."

Hansen opens up by refuting Germain-Mandel's assertion that the dispute in the FI at the time revolved around "the place of armed struggle in revolutionary politics in Latin America" (as claimed by Germain). The dispute, Hansen says, is caused by the "turn" *(tactical foray)* at the 9th World Congress of the FI which supported a new and unprecedented guerrilla warfare orientation for the Trotskyist movement, not in certain countries as a special tactic to supplement urban class "warfare," but based on a continental scale (i.e., applicable to all countries simultaneously, oblivious to the fact that this effectively side-lined national proletarian revolutionary politics on a meaningful basis – all simply by an FI congress edict!)

The SWP's opposition to this edict proposed by FI leader Maitan and later by Germain (an opposition supported fully by the Canadian Section) was that, at most, a tactic of guerrilla warfare might be considered in certain specific countries at specific stages of national liberation; but that guerrilla warfare as such could never constitute the main – or sole! – tactical approach of a Leninist party of revolution in any one country, let alone be adopted as a general strategic approach, let alone adopted as the approach for an entire continent.

What follows in SWP leader Hansen's polemic is a defense of the SWP's counterposed strategy of "party building" (patient construction of national revolutionary parties in Latin America with the support of their urban and rural worker and peasant masses, including electoral as well as support for extra-parliamentary action as a tactical application varying from country to country -- which again the Canadian section strongly supported as the proven historical path of Bolshevism historically.

SWP leader Hansen proceeds to criticize the Cuban and Guevara's attempts to export a Cuban-style revolution to the rest of Latin America, and to note its dramatic failures, involving loss of valuable cadre by jailing and murder by repressive regimes. He documents the disasters in Argentina and Bolivia that the Germain leadership's maneuvers and the guerrilla orientation of the FI directly resulted in, including the physical destruction of two national sections and defections of quasi-Trotskyist sections recognized by the FI. Again, up to 1972 the Canadian section was

formally in accord with SWP thinking on this subject (though by then the RCT faction *(the ultraleft Revolutionary Communist Tendency within the LSA/LSO)* uncritically championed the 9th Congress “Guevarist" line of the FI).

Hansen then attempted to turn back Germain's weak charges of the SWP's "opportunism" made in order to deflect obvious stinging truth of the FI's sudden new-found ultraleftist international politics.

3. Germain's “dragons in the North” de-fanged?

In answer to Germain's charges of Canadian "tail-endism" alleged especially against Canadian "unconditional and critical support" – it's “orientation” or strategy of winning workers' support for the mass labor party, while retaining a public organization and press free to intervene in all areas of the radicalization), i.e., by building the Canadian movement through intervention of Socialist and Left Caucuses within the independent New Democratic Party, one of the SWP's foremost spokespersons wavered and demonstrated his apparent total lack of awareness of Canadian revolutionary politics. In doing this he ignored fifty years of successfully applying an orientation which built the Canadian section – a fact known to all and presumably sanctioned internationally up until 1971! Certainly since 1955 there had been absolutely no questions or discussion raised about the conduct of the Canadian movement or, alas, any credit for this innovative and fruitful strategy, or its application in New Zealand or its validity for similar mass parliamentary labor parties in Britain or Australia.

Apparently, Hansen thought that when Germain went "Dragon hunting in the North" what he found were indeed small dragons in the case of a couple of the Canadian section's articles on the NDP, but, alas, also bigger and real dragons on the question of Canadian nationalism (which we of the Forward Group would more accurately describe as 'Canadian nationalist sentiment' given the lack of any existing nationalist political party or tendency, as well as the abject failure of several attempts in that regard by petit-bourgeois establishment dissident politicians.

Did Hansen offer to defend the Canadian section's urging workers' vote for the Canadian labor party on even a tactical basis, if not a strategic basis (the latter being the actual theoretical basis of support by the LSA for the NDP? – assuming he was aware of this fact of life in a closely neighbouring and intimate political relationship with the SWP over decades?) No, Hansen does not even proffer a defense of a possible tactical error based on a misreading by Canadian Trotskyists on the political situation in Canada (let alone reveal an understanding of LSA politics and the success in Canadian “party building” the strategy which he champions so vigorously; one that the LSA so prominently displayed, not only in its public campaigns, its press and by its independent youth group – the Young Socialists – and its press.)

Hansen declared: "The leaflet and the editorial do contain bad formulations (unfortunately for our education he does not say which formulations, or why, or how those perceived political errors might be corrected.) He goes on to say: “Comrade Germain quite properly put down two points for his side on his debater's scorecard. One hopes that the Canadian comrades will draw the proper lesson about carefully checking every single item they publish. Careless, or ill-thought-out formulations cannot only distort or misrepresent the position of the LSA/LSO, they can be seized on by factionalists to make out a case that otherwise would have nothing to stand on..."

Instead of analyzing any clues as to why these "bad formulations" might have been “seized” – "careless, ill-thought-out formulations" – presumably due to the inexperience of the talented new young LSA leadership led by John Riddell, or his cohort who had nevertheless obtained by then almost a decade experience within the quickly expanding Canadian section; instead of revealing other dragons in the Canadian closet such as the LSA's **1**ongstanding "unconditional, critical support" for the NDP (which a cursory reading of Canadian publications had been exposed since 1955, to a horrified world), or for that matter explaining why the then growing Canadian section chose to remain a mere “socialist League” and not a “socialist Party” in direct contention with the NDP for Canadian workers' allegiance. Perhaps Hansen (and the SWP generally) might gravely mistaken the LSA's documented orientation to the mass labor party as timidity, and not understood the stance of a very robust intervention into the reformist mass-based labor party (while conducting independent mass work in anti-war, women's and Cuban defense work, as a cursory glance at our public press would have immediately demonstrated).

Hansen goes on to soft-soap his readers with: "Comrade Germain omits mentioning that the leaflet and the editorial were exceptions; he did not point out that the general line of the LSA/LSO was correct as shown by resolutions and by the general editorial policy of the LSA/LSO press (!) The cause of his oversight, Comrade Germain will agree, is the strangely blind eye possessed by dragon hunters."

So, apparently, we all are to agree that the Canadians had made errors of an unexplained nature despite their fine newspaper articles -- just don't dig too deeply or ask to many questions of a small section which is not really of concern on the world scale (despite the 1970 FLQ bombing in Quebec and subsequent War Measures Act resulting in an abortive Federal armed occupation and jailing of radicals in Montreal). Apparently the FI leadership under Germain and Maitan – and by extension Hansen and the SWP leadership – certainly had no time to attempt to understand what the LSA/LSO is really saying, or studying their history or debates since the 1930s – debates on workers' parliamentary struggles involving their welfare such as medicare or labor legislation such as legal strikes – not armed struggle for direct insurrection, true; simply aimed at raising the current level of workers' consciousness. LSA politics were evidently tailored to transitional demands at raising the level of workers – unfortunately hardly in the spirit of the 9th Congress, i.e., by-passing urban pr oletarian struggle in Latin America by proclaiming guerrilla warfare as a “Leninist” strategy for an entire continent, via a magical transformation of unarmed largely student youth in these sections. No mention of the fact that the success of the Cuban Revolution was sealed by the winning over of Cuban workers – nor mention of the total lack of regard of growing dangers to these largely youthful urban vanguards facing military repression.

4. Des dragons au sein de la LSO

The apologia continues: Hansen writes: "With two dragons in his bag, Comrade Germain stalks another one, an article by Comrade Beiner in an issue of the ***Liberation, (Alain Beiner, Editor of the LSO's monthly tabloid).*** This contains formulations that, to believe Comrade Germain, would show that Beiner holds a two-stage theory of revolution, putting him in the camp of Menshevism. Comrade Beiner, of course holds no such position."

Research will have to be done on this document to determine the precise basis and rationale of Germain's attack on LSO leading comrade Beiner, and Hansen's defense – or more precisely, Hansen's lack of due defence. Suffice it to say that a

frontal attack by a leader of the International on a local leader of a Section of this serious nature is an affront against all concepts of the role of the FI. Even if there was confusion or a hint of error to back up Germain's incredible allegation, any principled Section leadership would **be** duty-bound to protest this destructive type of unfraternal and non-educational intervention. In the meantime, a devastating evaluation of Germain's (FI leader Mandel's) political acumen would evidently be urgently in order.

That the charge of “menshevism” could seriously be made against the – again – youthful LSO leadership without reference to any concrete or specific errors made in our press or documentation, is absurd – a cursory glance at its record available in our website archives, with our in-depth analysis of Québécois nationalism and our strident call for a Quebec labor party and opposition to the petit-bourgeois Parti Québécois' failure to champion genuine national demands such as the (successful) call for French unilingualism – all this stands on record!

5. The bugbear of so-called bourgeois Canadian nationalism

Then came the main bone of contention: Germain's discovery of the Canadian Section's erroneous politics vis-à-vis the phenomenon of Canadian nationalism, which we saw as a positive anti-imperialist sentiment – one widely espoused by the left generally and in the NDP (championed by 'Waffle' caucus, the largest left wing ever to appear inside the labor party and to directly challenge its leadership), while within the union movement being expressed by the powerful movement toward Canadian autonomy and independent unions able to both bargain more freely with Canadian-based bosses of dominant US branch-plants in manufacturing and resources, and free at the same time to engage in independent political action via creating and dominating the NDP.)

Apparently, Hansen views Germain's hostile examination of the Canadian section's policies as fundamentally justified. Hansen pretends that the following remarks by Germain refers to Beiner'scontribution, not to an inquisition by Germain on the Section's position on Canadian nationalism, a position discussed and debated in 1967! *(the Rands-Engler Tendency – see LSA leader Crandall's polemic in Part 2 – Ed.),* and finally accepted in 1968 as elaborated by Ross Dowson and the comrades of the LSA in "US-Canada Relations"):

"On this slim basis, Comrade Germain delivers a lengthy lecture on nationalism, the national liberation struggle, and their relation to the theory of permanent revolution. If you abstract the factional bias, you can hardly be against some of this educational material, particularly the excellent quotations from Lenin and Trotsky. Other parts are wrong or self-contradictory." Why Hansen would want to “abstract the factional bias” except in an unprincipled accommodation with Germain and the egregious distortion of Trotskyism being proffered by the FI leadership, is a question only history might explain. As to the “excellent quotations” from Lenin and Trotsky we could respond by noting that certain passages of their writings do in fact emphasize the nature of the nationalism of oppressor countries vs. the nationalism of oppressed countries; i.e., the latter including those advanced capitalist countries experiencing heavy foreign investment leading to economic dominance in key sectors, which is likewise reflected in practical political dominance in even apparently sovereign capitalist countries (the hasty adoption of many “free-trade” pacts) – a Canadian predicament that world-renown economist Mandel himself described as “an imperialized imperialism.” (See the Dowson website W2-The National Question for the full documentation).

In other words, Hansen continues "if you abstract" the fact, that the whole discussion on nationalism is to undermine the recently-installed Riddell leadership of the LSA and to shore up the RCT faction in Canada, this is great material from Lenin and Trotsky (which the RCT also used to slander the Canadian majority, and spur it on to reject the patiently explained polemics of the Dowson-led United Tendency within the LSA. This was the group of comrades who in vain tried to get through the brick wall of factionalism (fed by the international reputation Mandel-Germain and the wide prestige of the FI behind him). The LSA-UT was overwhelmed in its precarious position of defending the progressive nature of Canadian nationalist sentiment, as obvious as it was and remains – a central, if muted issue of growing concern to the broad Canadian activist, academic and labor left.

Without any reference to the history of the debate on this question within the Canadian section, Hansen proceeds to pronounce on the debate between the United Tendency. Without any discussion of this debate, and ignoring his obligation as a Trotskyist sister-movement supposedly in fraternal agreement with the SWP for decades, or attempting to defend the established position of the Canadian section since the late 1960s, he simply swings in behind Mandel's revision of the Canadian section's history:

"Inasmuch as the Canadian comrades are preparing a detailed answer to Comrade Germain, I will not pause on these points, but proceed to his attack on Ross Dowson and the majority of the leadership of the Canadian section. Here is the tale as told by Comrade Germain:"

"*During the summer of 1972, we were confronted with an extraordinary spectacle. Within the space of a month, the Central Committee of the Canadian section, the LSA/LSO, first nearly unanimously adopted the general line of a political resolution expressing support for 'Canadian nationalism' as against 'US domination of Canada,' and then rejecting the very same line by an overwhe1ming majority.*

"We don't want to concentrate on the somewhat disturbing formal aspects of this development. How is it possible that without a word of explanation a majority of Trotskyist leaders can adopt two completely conflicting positions, within a few weeks of each other, one of which is totally alien to the traditions of Leninism?..."

Stop the record right here. Note that Germain is not congratulating the Canadian leadership for suddenly seeing the light and making a badly need correction of a line "totally alien to the traditions of Leninism"! (Truly a tour de force, deserving a congratulatory note, not an approbation.) They were a young leadership, and viola! they saw the error of their ways (if confused, only after receiving a lecture on nationalism from a world-renown economist and leader of the FI). The LSA leadership had a hard choice: defend their established positions on Québécois nationalism (on the basis of the hallowed tradition of the Trotskyist movement towards national minority rights (see Dowson's 1945 initial sketch on Quebec in our archives), as well as the unique form of nascent Canadian nationalist sentiment by fighting the newly armed RCT ultralefts, or... taking the line of least resistance, under pressure of the international's ultra-left Guevarist line on armed struggle in Latin America. Ceding the battlefield, the LSA/LSO leadership attacked the vulnerable United Tendency, in their haste making support for their positions a matter of personal loyalty. (Follow the Pope in Rome, is a much safer policy when inquisition is in the air.)

Germain's rhetoric continues, as quoted by Hansen: *"How could an experienced Trotskyist leader like Comrade Ross Dowson, trained for decades in the Trotskyist programme, arrive at such a gravely-wrong position? Why did the large bulk of the Central Committee of the Canadian section follow him at first on that line?"*

It turns put that these are rhetorical questions (for no answer is obviously required; it's in the wind, I will reveal all; I know I have your loyalty.) Again, no congratulations to the recently-installed LSA leadership on finding the true road on their own; instead only castigation for "*following him* (Ross Dowson) *at first on that line*" (the suggestion is they were all young careerists in awe of Dowson!) No question from Germain – or Hansen — that being professional full-time Canadian revolutionaries in the midst of Canadian labor politics, that they might have been able to assimilate the Marxist principles of Lenin and Trotsky and passed on to a valuable insight of a unique form of nationalism in a country Germain himself had characterized as "an imperialized imperialism," a rather unique situation of one advanced capitalist state being voluntarily integrated into another larger capitalist state. That being the case, in the view of Mandel, is the case against Canadian nationalist sentiment – not any existing nationalist movement, mind you, only a general widespread consciousness, the type that caught the attention and sympathy of the great Marxist thinkers – is "totally alien to the traditions of Leninism?"

The worst is yet to come

Hansen in a fatherly way tries to explain the debacle,and pooh-poohs Germain's prompting of the RCT faction; but worse is to come!

"Good debater that he is, Comrade Germain has his answers ready: '*Because,*' he says, '*the method of approach to the national question in an imperialist country was wrong — and had been wrong too in the approach to the Quebecois question.*(See Editor's Note #1 below) *Because, contrary to Lenin's advice, the Canadian comrades did not start from "a clear notion of historical and economic circumstances,' i.e., from an analysis of objective class* ***relations,*** *but from speculations about the moods of the masses. What inspired Comrade Dowson to move to this wrong position was the fact that growing mass support seemed to manifest itself for concrete demands oriented against U.S. imperialism.* ***At the root of his revisionism is the same deviation as tai1-endism."*** ("In Defence of Leninism: In defence of the Fourth International," p. 35. Emphasis in original.)"

Before proceeding to the "explanations" of the SWP leader Hansen, it is worth noting Germain's procedure in this overtly hostile declaration of war against the Canadian section (to the benefit of whom? we can only conjecture, if not dissident ultraleft groupings originating largely outside the LSA and pounding on the LSA's doors for recruitment with the implicit support of the FI leadership.) For Germain this is not a matter of an appeal to an errant section to halt its mistaken ways, nor a call for correction of a longstanding national section which has one of the longest histories of struggle against opportunism in its orientation to the CCF-NDP in Canada, and contribution to the wor1d movement (recall Spector's role in introducing Trotsky's first critique of the Stalin's Comintern to Cannon and Dowson's leading role in the 1963 reunification of the FI). This is a reading out of a section, for factional purposes. This "lecture" on Marxism on nationalism is not meant to educate an errant section, but to condemn it as part and parcel of this same deviation (opportunism, we gather) of "*this same deviation of tail-endism"* i.e, the LSA's policy of unconditional but critical support to the mass labor party in Canada; for which the LSA suddenly exposed – after 20 years – bowing before "social-democratic" politics!

6. In conclusion

And therein lay the real reason for this barrage from the FI and approbation from the SWP: precisely their joint lack of objective analysis and understanding of the accuracy of the Canadian section's "analysis of objective class relations" that places the leadership of the reformist NDP. This is the LSA “orientation” which assesses this leadership at a par, or in advance of, the present consciousness of the mass of Canadian workers – less than 25% of whom at consistently vote for an independent working class party. This misjudgment by the FI leadership, preoccupied with imposing upon us, with a unilaterally generated European majority, a strategy of continental guerrilla warfare in Latin America as well as ultraleft turn away from the electoral and economic struggle of the European and world proletariat. Totally missing here were any shared "speculations about the moods of the European worker masses" – an analysis of which we expect – or assessment of European extra-parliamentary struggles, exhibiting the high level of class consciousness in the key Euro union nations, home of the most advanced proletariat in world capitalist countries!

Could it possibly be that the LSA's “speculations about the moods of the masses” are more based on mundane reality by the North American sections than that of the FI-HQ in Brussels or Paris? Indeed, a reading of the Canadian Trotskyist press might yield "speculations" worth examining and discussing – Germain here misses a great opportunity to educate us. In any case, our website is the record of what the Canadian movement “speculated” on, if not “carefully” at least in detail, without drama or declamatory rhetoric – in essence contributions worthy of Marxist methods, always open to debate, but which never received the attention of the FI before Germain's sudden wake-up call denouncing the LSO leadership.

Much more could have, and should have been written assessing the unique case of Canadian nationalist sentiment to be sure (although the documentation prior to the LSA/LSO convention was very expansive), if only to educate the world movement on this key element of class consciousness in a country so intimately tied economically and culturally to the world's central imperialist colossus, the USA.

But then, Hansen offers no explanation for what went wrong – why this crisis of the burgeoning Canadian movement at the same period it was taking centre-stage in mass anti-war, women's, Cuban defence work and defence of Quebec's self-determination and its struggle for a unlingual society!

Could it be that the concept of a Marxist orientation to “Social-Democratic"-type mass labor parties might be a specialty of British-type parliamentary systems (i.e., Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and that they are beyond the ken (and deep interest) of European and American Trotskyists. If so, what type of FI leadership could be said to advise fruitfully the course of the revolution in such countries? Would not a special commission advising the FI on our anglo-saxon parliamentary problems and solutions be of value to the world movement (i.e, types of the tactic of entrism in mass movements)? How should the forces of revolutionary socialism in these backward but centrally important countries be deployed by the FI in these countries? Perhaps – only with a healthy and patient measure of autonomous, arms-length solidarity, it could be argued.

Unlike Europe, where many countries possess more than one genuine socialist or labor party formations (social-democratic parties representing sections of the unions, Stalinist parties, or various split-offs sharing the allegiance of workers' votes), or countries such as the US where the labor party formation is unknown.

If, indeed, a single "continental-wide" revolutionary strategy could be applied by the FI, it would be in these countries above all. This strategy would be evolved over a lengthy time, due to the difficulty in weaning the workers away from the hold of the social-democratic leadership – not to mention the attraction of faux-liberal capitalist parties – of these mass labor formations. Such was the case in Canada. That is why in Canada the most highly developed and sophisticated labor party orientation was achieved by the LSA and its preceding formations from the 1930s, particularly as expressed in the personal career of its principal leader over this period, Ross Dowson in collaboration with the leadership and active membership of the Canadian movement from before World War 2, through the experience of the postwar R.W.P., the SEL/SIC, and the LSA/LSO.

We Canadians believe that our orientation to the CCF and the NDP in Canada could be, and should be, emulated in other countries with similar political frameworks (with identical robust entrism in Britain and the ex-Commonwealth countries) as a strategy. Elsewhere, many elements of this strategy undoubtedly could be applied tactically (or have historically been applied, such as the "French turn") in other countries with labor or centrist parties (also note that the SWP was built with a variant of such tactics.) As such, the highly developed and sophisticated Canadian strategy is of international importance – certainly not a plaything to be bandied about or lightly dismissed by the Germains' **fantasy opportunist cure-alls such as a "continental strategy" of rural armed combat for Latin America, which can only succeed with the support of the urban working class as in Cuba!**

Note 1: An examination of the LSA's analysis of Québécois nationalism would begin with our early recognition of the right of self-determination of this nation-within-a-nation (the spirit of which was extended to Canadian natives as well in the 1960s – all documented in our press and literature). However, notably the LSO declined support for the call for Quebec's independence before the 1970s on the basis of lack of an evident proletarian response, but the growing sentiment for Quebec nationhood was enthusiastically embraced by the LSA/LSO especially when it became evident that Quebec workers' demands for French to be defended as the language of the workplace and in education had come to the fore, albeit taking the form of political support for the petit-bourgeois Parti Québécois. Our press in Quebec henceforth campaigned for a 'Yes' vote in two Quebec referendums while it abstained in English Canada but organized speaking tours of Quebec unionist and independentists to explain the dynamic of their national demands in terms of the battle for an "independent, French and socialist" Quebec. Thus we were able to build the FI section in Quebec with a francophone leadership and educate English-Canadian workers as to the legitimacy of Quebec workers' demands. The record stands in the archive of our journals and literature, an impressive achievement which includes pamphlets published by the LSO – as well as one published by the SWP. Evidently these LSO public campaigns would have been approved by Lenin as evidence of exemplary national majority-culture politics towards a national minority, in the spirit of Marx's and Engels' support for Irish nationalism as well as Trotsky's militant support of Ukrainian nationalist sentiment (not to mention Lenin's voluminous strictures on the subject of the right of self-determination of national minorities).

To recap Mandel's strictures on the LSA's sensitivity to the national question –not only within Canada but also in the case of Quebec ("*the method of approach to the national question in an imperialist country was wrong — and had been wrong too in the approach to the Quebecois question. Because, contrary to Lenin's advice, the Canadian comrades did not start from "a clear notion of historical and economic circumstances,' i.e., from an*

analysis of objective class ***relations,*** *but from speculations about the moods of the masses. What inspired Comrade Dowson to move to this wrong position was the fact that growing mass support seemed to manifest itself for concrete demands oriented against U.S. imperialism.* ***At the root of his revisionism is the same deviation as tail-endism."*** – Emphasis by Germain/Mandel) it appears he is conflating Quebec nationalism with English-Canada's, whereas the fundamental duty of revolutionists to to distinguish between ethnic majority and minority nationalist sentiments within the state (as per Lenin's most fundamental advice.) Where Germain complains about Dowson's "speculations about the moods of the masses" he misunderstands the Canadian movement's visceral insight into the reality and degree of repression the Québécois suffer within anglo-saxon capitalist Confederation – decided and acted upon by the LSA/LSO on, indeed, "a clear notion of historical and economic circumstances" since its first documents in 1945 – apparently accepted by all sections of the FI since that time. Germain mistakes the LSA/LSO's "speculations about the moods of the masses" which were in fact carefully studied and discussed political evaluations of the "moods" of the Québécois masses including their actions in the streets and those of the trade union *centrales* which featured explicitly anti-capitalist and sovereigntist views and demands – "moods" which Lenin himself as well as Trotsky would have paid close attention to and acted upon.

The question remains, how would Germain have advised Comrade Beiner and the LSO to correct their policies either in terms of application of the right of self-determination or in the strategy of building a francophone (native) leadership within Quebec? (Which, by the way, structured the LSO within a single unified structure with the LSA albeit with special Quebec representation on central bodies – as per the advice of Lenin and Trotsky – see W10-Documents).

A further selection of prior and subsequent SWP (US) documents on this debate

"International Information Bulletins – Published by the (US) Socialist Workers Party as a fraternal courtesy to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International")
(in the archive files of this website)*
(# documents listed, not available in these website archives; found in the "Ross Dowson fonds R10995," National Archives, Ottawa; see Finding Aid No. 2360, pp 37-38, SWP IIBs and DBs, Container 10, Boxes 8 and 12)

#1971-IIB No. 2: Blanco-Maitan letter, on Latin America (**notations by R. Dowson,** at National Archives only)

*1971-April-IIB No. 3: "In defense of the Leninist strategy of party building" by Joseph Hansen (reference to the Canadian section to terrorist events by the FLQ in Quebec, pp.27-29) ***(Notations by R. Dowson in the N.A. copy only, not seen)***

#1972-IIB-A4: European revolutionary party building **(notations by R. Dowson & additional notes)**

*1973-Vol.X, No. 10, July: "Comrade Germain's Errors on the national question," by Gus Horowitz (with reference to the Canadian section and events in Quebec, pp.10-12

#1973-Vol.X, No. 12, July: "The underlying differences in method," by Joseph Hansen *(a polemic against the 9th World Congress of the FI decision to adopt a strategy of guerrilla warfare on a continental scale in Latin America, which however touches critically on aspects of the position of the Canadian section on nationalist sentiment in English Canada as well as on the LSA strategic orientation to the Canadian labor party.)* ***(Quotations in original 1999 article only seen)***

#1973-Vol. X, No. 16: "The record of Canadian section; A reply to Germain" by Riddell & Young

*1974-Vol. XI, No. 4, January: "A scandalous document – A reply to Germain," by Nahuel Moreno (with analysis centering on developments in Bolivia and Argentina)

The legacy of Ernest Mandel to the Fourth International

(Ed. Note: see also in W20-Marxist Booklist – A full index of writings by Ernest Mandel

1962, 1968, 1977 (paperback): **Marxist Economic Theory**, Volumes I and II (795 pp.) *(Review by* The Economist *(GB) "...by far the best popularization of Marx's economic theory that has appeared for forty or fifty years ... an ambitious, and largely successful, attempt to bring he doctrine up to date." (1970)*
1964: **An Introduction to Marxist economic theory** (Merit Pub., N.Y., 78 pp. YS-USA pamphlet)
I. Theory of Value & Surplus-value; II. Capital and Capitalism; III. Neo-Capitalism
*1979: **Introduction to Marxism** (Ink Links, London GB, 2nd Edition, in 17 short chapters,192pp.)*

Part 1b

The SWP apologizes to Mandel/Germain for the 'mistakes' of the Canadian Section of the Fourth International

(*from* IDB Vol. X No. 12, July 1973: Joseph Hansen on "The underlying differences in method"

Index:

I. The Origin of the Dispute

II. Comrade Germain's Counterattack *(including the extract below – Ed.*)

III. The Gap Between Theory and Practice

(Full extract of section on the LSA and LSO: Pages 21-24)

Dragon Hunting in the North

In one of the literary flourishes in his counterattack, Comrade Germain has me turning a "strangely blind eye" to the "tail-endist" currents that are "developing today inside the world Trotskyist movement." The cause of this strangely blind eye, according to him, is that I have been seized by an, "all-consuming passion for tracking down and slaying the dangerous dragon of 'rural guerrilla warfare' and 'terrorist Guevarism.'" ("In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," p. 37.) *(Germain/Mandel's reply to the SWP – Web Ed.)*

Comrade Germain, I must admit, is right on target. I can only plead guilty and see what can be done about that strangely blind eye. But Comrade Germain should not have stopped after catching me. My bad example is spreading in the international. Comrade Germain, for instance, has now himself been seized by an all-consuming passion for tracking down and slaying dangerous dragons. The difference is that instead of trying to spot the head, as I have done, he examines the other end of the beast and insists on a distinctive anatomical feature. The animal must have a tail end.

In Canada he has found a hunting ground teeming with game of this kind. He bagged two specimens in short order. One was a leaflet issued under the name of the Young Socialists. The other was an editorial in *Labor Challenge.* The two items appeared during the 1972 general elections in Canada in which the LSA/LSO called for critical support to the New Democratic Party. To believe Comrade Germain, these two items constitute damning evidence that in adopting a stand of critical support for the Canadian version of a labor party and asking the workers to vote for it, the LSA/LSO tail-ended "reformism."

The leaflet and the editorial do contain bad formulations. Comrade Germain quite properly put down two points for his side on his debater's scorecard. One hopes that the Canadian comrades will draw the proper lesson about carefully checking every single item they publish. Careless, or ill-thought-out formulations cannot only dis tort or misrepresent the position of the LSA/LSO, they can be seized on by factionalists to make out a case that otherwise would have nothing to stand on.

Comrade Germain omits mentioning that the leaflet and the editorial were exceptions; he did not point out that the general line of the LSA/LSO was correct as shown by resolutions and by the general editorial policy of the LSA/LSO press. The cause of his oversight, Comrade Germain will agree, is the strangely blind eye possessed by dragon hunters.

With two dragons in his bag, Comrade Germain stalks another one, an article by Comrade Beiner in an issue of *Liberation.* This contains formulations that, to believe Comrade Germain, would show that Beiner holds a two-stage theory of revolution, putting him in the camp of Menshevism. Comrade Beiner, of course holds no such position.

On this slim basis, Comrade Germain delivers a lengthy lecture on nationalism, the national liberation struggle, and their relation to the theory of permanent revolution. If you abstract the factional bias, you can hardly be against some of this educational material, particularly the excellent quotations from Lenin and Trotsky. Other parts are wrong or self-contradictory.

Inasmuch as the Canadian comrades are preparing a detailed answer to Comrade Germain, I will not pause on these points, but proceed to his attack on Ross Dowson and the majority of the leadership of the Canadian section. Here is the tale as told by Comrade Germain:

"During the summer of 1972, we were confronted with an extraordinary spectacle. Within the space of a month, the Central Committee of the Canadian section, the LSA/ LSO, first nearly unanimously adopted the general line of a political resolution expressing support for 'Canadian nationalism' as against 'US domination of Canada,' and then rejected the very same line by an overwhelming majority.

"We don't want to concentrate on the somewhat disturbing formal aspects of this development. How is it possible that without a word of explanation a majority of Trotskyist leaders can adopt two completely conflicting positions, within a few weeks of each other, one of which is totally alien to the tradition of Leninism? . . .

"How could an experienced Trotskyist leader like Comrade Ross Dowson, trained for decades in the Trotskyist programme, arrive at such a gravely wrong position? Why did the large bulk of the Central Committee of the Canadian section follow him at first on that line?"

Good debater that he is, Comrade Germain has his answers ready: "Because," he says, "the method of approach to the national question in an imperialist country was wrong —and had been wrong too in the approach to the Quebecois question. Because, contrary to Lenin's advice, the Canadian comrades did not start from 'a clear notion of historical and economic circumstances,' i. e., from an *analysis of objective class relations,* but from speculations about the moods of the masses. What inspired Comrade Dowson to move to this wrong position was the fact that growing mass support seemed to manifest

itself for concrete demands oriented against U. S. imperialism. At the root of his revisionism is the

same deviation of tail-endism." ("In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," p. 35. Emphasis in original.)

The problems facing our Canadian comrades were not as simple — or as mysterious — as Comrade Germain would have us believe. And the solutions they found through their own independent efforts were completely in accordance with the program and principles of Leninism and Trotskyism.

Our movement has been confronted in recent years by the rise of a new current among the Canadian masses and particularly the vanguard. It has been labeled "Canadian nationalism." The term, in my opinion, is rather misleading although the movement has assumed some nationalist aspects. The phenomenon is contradictory. One of its prominent aspects was opposition to U. S. intervention in the Vietnamese civil war. It is antiwar, and antibomb — features that were especially outstanding in the mass protest actions against the nuclear bomb testing at Amchitka. These components, along with others, have given the movement a decidedly anti-American coloration— a phenomenon to be observed in comparable movements in many countries besides Canada.

These features alone compelled our Canadian comrades to pay increasingly close attention to this developing movement in view of its relation to their work in mobilizing mass actions in defense of the Vietnamese revolution around the theme of opposition to the complicity of the Canadian government in the U. S. intervention in Vietnam.

The division in the leadership of the LSA/LSO began to occur when the "Canadian nationalist" movement reached such proportions as to require theoretical assessment as something *new* in Canadian politics. The precise details as to how the various comrades came to appreciate this were largely accidental — as in all such turns in our movement anywhere in the world — and hardly affect the substance of the process.

At first sight, Comrade Dowson's position appeared to be an extension of an earlier stand taken by the LSA/ LSO. This gave it a great deal of weight. But other members of the leadership were uneasy about some of Comrade Dowson's conclusions. These appeared to contradict other positions long held by the LSA/LSO. At what point had Comrade Dowson gone wrong? They felt that they faced a small crisis in reaching a correct and rounded position and they set out to resolve it. This decision was completely to the credit of the Canadian section, testifying in actuality to the solid foundations laid down by Comrade Dowson in particular in building the section.

A discussion, preparatory to a convention, was opened up. The discussion was thorough and democratic; in fact it was a model discussion well worth study by the entire Fourth International. "In the space of 11 months, some 58 issues of the English-language Internal Discussion Bulletin were published, containing 91 contributions — for a total of 1,665 pages of typewritten material and approximately 675,000 words. Of this, about half consisted of minority views in opposition to the line resolutions submitted by the Political Committee." ("Trotskyists Hold Cross-Canada Convention" *Intercontinental Press (SWP, New York –Web Ed.),*May 21, 1973, p. 602.)

The convention itself was conducted in exemplary fash ion, the majority making a number of organizational concessions not called for in the rules of democratic cen tralism in order to assure various tendencies or special points of view the maximum opportunity to express their opinions.

The vote on the question of special interest to Germain, the position of Comrade Dowson on "Canadian nationalism," was 5 for, 48 against, 0 abstentions. The resolution presented by the majority of the Political Committee was adopted by a wide margin.

Comrade Dowson and the comrades who agreed with him fought hard for their position in the internal bulletin, in branch discussions, and on the floor of the convention. When the vote was in, they announced that they would abide by the decision of the majority. They dissolved the tendency they had

formed to advance their viewpoint, although in the next internal discussion they may submit new material in defense of their position.

Taking the discussion as a whole, it marked an advance for the LSA/LSO in clarifying the problems facing Canadian Trotskyism, educating the membership, and in developing a new layer of cadres and leaders.

To anyone really acquainted with the Canadian section of the Fourth International this outcome was not unexpected. To anyone whose knowledge does not go beyond what appears in Comrade Germain's attack, the outcome may have appeared surprising. It does not fit in with Comrade Germain's description of an organization that no longer uses the Leninist method and is incapable of doing anything better than paddling a canoe in the wake of reformism.

Comrade Germain's description was misleading because he failed to describe the positions taken by the majority of the Political Committee that were presented for discussion by the membership. His one-sided presentation left the impression that the line advanced by the leadership of the Canadian section consisted of a reformist, tail-end-ist mess. He associated this mess with Comrade Dowson's position on Canadian nationalism. The truth was that Comrade Dowson stood in a minority in the leadership on this particular question. From Comrade Germain's biased presentation you would never guess that the leadership of the Canadian section of the Fourth International is of high level and quite capable of standing on its own feet and learning from its mistakes.

Comrade Germain's factional attitude — for that is what it is — has an explanation. He is interested, as is his right, in advancing the international tendency he represents. In the Canadian section, a minority grouping that calls itself the Revolutionary Communist Tendency* has been in opposition to the "regime" for some time. It got in touch with the leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency, who asked the RCT to send documentation as to its views. In return the RCT received advance copies of "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International." *(*The 'Revolutionary Communist Tendency' made up largely of youth outside the LSA seeking admission as an ultra-left grouping in opposition to the existing politics of the LSA, and in defence of Germain/Mandel and the IV majority – Web Ed.)*

The document was circulated privately among the members of the RCT during the pre-convention discussion. The intensive barrage leveled by Comrade Germain in this document against the leadership of the Canadian section was not without effect among the members of the RCT. To the inexperienced or unwary, its seemingly unanswerable criticisms and charges appeared all the more unanswerable because the author withheld release of the document until ten days before the convention. The Canadian Trotskyist leaders under attack by Com rade Germain had no opportunity to defend themselves during the pre-convention discussion.

One of the consequences was that the RCT developed an extremely factional attitude. At the convention they pictured the Quebec wing of the Canadian section of the Fourth International as having "degenerated," a process they held to be "irreversible." The real Trotskyists in Quebec, according to them, were to be found outside the Canadian section of the Fourth International; that is, in a small group headed by Michel Mill, who had split from the LSA/LSO. According to the RCT, the process of degeneration in the rest of the organization was entering its "final stage" but was not yet complete. Here some of the rank and file could still be "saved." In addition to this, the RCT maintained that the views of two other small groups on the fringe of the Trotskyist movement were genuinely Trotskyist. These groups, called the "Red Circle" and the "Old Mole," have been engaging in unity maneuvers in hope of attracting some members from the LSA/LSO.

Comrade Germain indicated his attitude on this question in the following passage:

"There is no justification for comrade Mill's group's split from the LSA-LSO. In our view, comrades who have serious differences with the majority line of their national sections should fight for their political views inside these sections."

They really should, shouldn't they? The language could hardly be called cutting; lest feelings had been wounded, however, Comrade Germain thoughtfully spread soothing salve on the splitters:

"But this being said, objectivity demands to state unequivocally that Comrade Mill has been proved right against the majority leadership of the Canadian section in both instances where he differed with it on the national question." ("In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," p. 32.)

Let us not forget that Comrade Germain failed to include a presentation of the four majority resolutions that were placed before the membership for discussion and a vote. (Three were available before he finished his con tribution; the other became available before it was published.) Let us not forget, too, that Comrade Germain's document circulated only among the members of the RCT prior to the convention so that the badge of approval pinned on Mill did not come up for objective examination. In short, Comrade Germain got away with it.

This helps us to understand better why, immediately following the convention, a number of members of the RCT split from the Canadian section of the Fourth International. It would have been a fitting exit had they lined up for a tap on the wrist and a kiss on the cheek as they tail-ended toward the camp of the man whom "objectivity demands to state has been proved right."

The 'Khvostism' of the SWP

In handling the Socialist Workers Party, Comrade Germain is much more cautious and diplomatic than he is with the Canadian section of the Fourth International and the sympathizing section of the Fourth International in Argentina. However, this commendable tone is not shared by others in his camp. For instance, one of his zealous ultraleft admirers in Venezuela, apparently reflecting some of the things being said in private, accuses the leadership of the SWP of "congenital reformism," of "tail-ending . . . the religious and pacifist organizations" in the antiwar movement, of "religious respect for the laws of the bourgeois state, a dogmatic and routinist mentality, conservatism, total absence of revolutionary audacity, total absence of imagination and creative talent, and finally manifest pusillanimity." In his opinion, the "reformist cancer must be extirpated in the most energetic way. . . ." ("The International Undermined by Reformism," by J. Montero.)

(By a curious coincidence — or is it so curious? — the cancer metaphor has been used by Comrade Germain's followers in Canada against the leadership of the LSA/LSO: "Clearly, the cancer of reformism has assumed malignant proportions in the Canadian section." ["Social Democracy and the LSA" by Bret Smiley and Walter Davis, League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière Discussion Bulletin, No. 29, February 1973, p. 13.])

No doubt Comrade Germain will plead that he should not be held responsible for the extremist language of some of his followers. To that one must agree that they are not yet polished debaters. On the other hand, the direct correspondence between language and concept in their polemics is of advantage in bringing things into the open where they can be debated and clarified.

(…)

(end of extract from SWP IIB Vol. X No. 12, July 1973 – Web Ed.)

PART 2

Documentation on: The F.I. and S.W.P. condemnation of Canadian Trotskyist politics

2A) An international Counter-document to the F.I. majority
(See also below the relevant 1967 debate within the Young Socialists, the autonomous youth group in solidarity with the LSA/LSO which follows: "IN REPLY TO COMRADE FRAZER," by J. Crandall (John R.) (W17-DB Vol. 3 No. 11 July 1967)*

2B) The Counter-document by the New Zealand section

A) On the Orientation of the Fourth International in Europe

(International Internal Discussion Bulletin Vol. XI No. 3 −January 1974)

By Dieter, GIM-Germany; Torben Hansen, RSF-Denmark; Marcel, LRT-Belgium; Tony Roberts, IMG-Britain; Anders Svedin, RMF-Sweden; Mary-Alice Waters *(Comrade Waters in 1974 a leading young member of SWP, New York −Ed.)*

(All emphasis throughout by the Web Ed.)

1. **At the 1969 World Congress, a minority of the delegates argued that the ultraleft turn on Latin America, if persisted in, could not help but have consequences for the general line of the Fourth International elsewhere.** The IEC majority document on "Building Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" contains a series of errors that stem from the same methodological mistakes committed in the "Resolution on Latin America" adopted at the last world congress.

These errors consist in taking the general tendency in the development of the class struggle on an entire continent and transforming it into an immediate perspective for every country instead of taking it as a framework for analyzing the different rates of development of the class struggle in each country and their concrete interactions.

This "analysis" is then used to rationalize and justify imposing a tactic like guerrilla warfare, or "minority violence" and "exemplary actions," on every section, thus replacing the Leninist strategy of building a revolutionary party and contradicting the method of the transitional program.

Underlying these errors is an adaptation to the political moods of the radicalizing forces ("the new vanguard with a mass character"). The hope that this can be transformed into an "adequate instrument" through which we can lead the proletarian revolution gradually dilutes the Leninist perspective of constructing mass Bolshevik parties.

2. We believe it is correct to write a document on capitalist Europe analyzing the broad outlines of economic, social and political developments. It is also possible to draw some general conclusions from this analysis that will help orient our sections. Such a document, along with others, outlining the principal guidelines for our work in such areas as the trade unions, the mass

workers parties, student movement, anti-imperialist campaigns, women's liberation work, etc., would provide a solid basis for each section to analyze the situation in its country, develop perspectives, and decide on its own tactics and orientation.

3. Even on this level of economic, social and political analysis, however, the method of the IEC majority resolution contains some obvious errors. **It fails to deal with such questions as the European Common Market; it almost completely ignores the significance of the Irish freedom struggle and the impact this struggle has, and will have, not only on the class struggle in Britain, but throughout Europe;** it virtually ignores the fact that capitalist Europe exists in a world context, where the European bourgeoisie plays a major imperialist role. It abstracts the class struggle in Europe from its dialectical interrelationship with the political revolution and colonial revolution.

4. But the European document does much more than draw some basic conclusions from a general analysis of capitalist Europe: it actually deduces a categorical prognosis for all the European countries, as well as a "tactic" for building the party, to be applied by all the European sections. In his reply to Comrade Waters, Comrade Pierre Frank stated that only one short-term variant could be anticipated: the generalization of revolutionary crises in all capitalist Europe.

5. This schematic and oversimplified approach makes it difficult for the leaderships of the European sections to correctly analyze the political situation in each country. A combination of a lack of concrete analysis on the one hand and a transplantation of the method and projections of the European document on the other can only lead to (and in fact already has led to) serious errors in several European sections.

6. There is no question that capitalist Europe has witnessed a general upsurge in workers struggles since 1968, a rise that will lead to class confrontations of an even sharper character, as inter-imperialist rivalry is growing and the economic situation is deteriorating. Revolutionary explosions could occur in several countries, producing wide-ranging repercussions.

However, the IEC majority resolution devotes far too little analysis to the different rates of development of the class struggle in the various countries.

In this regard it errs in the direction of an exaggerated "optimism" by moving very quickly and in a very superficial way to equate economic crisis, political crisis of the bourgeoisie, crisis of reformism, and pre-revolutionary or revolutionary crisis.

Applying the IEC majority line to Britain, the National Committee majority perspectives document for the December 1973 conference of the IMG ("The Crisis of British Capitalism and its Current International Context") starts from the economic crisis of the British bourgeoisie, which is equated with a "decisive" confrontation, which is in turn equated with a crisis (if not the demise) of the Tory party, which is again equated with a rise of fascism.

The methodological error of the European document is the same as the one found in the Latin American resolution adopted at the 1969 world congress. The general tendency for a continent is confused with the immediate situation in all the countries without taking into

account the profound differences that exist, the reality of ebbs as well as upsurges in the class struggle, or, for example, the influences that partial defeats in one or another country have on the class struggle elsewhere.

7. We therefore reject the generalization of revolutionary crises throughout all Europe as a short-term certainty or as the single variant determining the activity of every section. The political line for each country must be elaborated by analyzing within the more general context we indicated the evolution of the political situation in each country.

8. Moreover, the activity of our sections is determined not only by our general political analysis, but also by the size and political maturity of our own cadres and the relationship of forces with other currents within the workers movement. The European document tends to ignore these factors, and uses the so-called "analysis of the period" as a rationalization for abdicating responsibility for involvement in and leadership of other reflections of the radicalization which are in no way "peripheral" to the development of the class struggle in Europe, and in which our numerically small cadres can play a significant political and even mass leadership role: the student movement, anti-imperialist campaigns, the women's liberation movement, etc.

By downplaying these questions, the European document tends to underestimate the uneven and combined development of the radicalization, which can offer small revolutionary groups opportunities to gain valuable experience and recruit substantially. This underestimation is most blatantly revealed by the absence of a balance sheet of the youth radicalization despite the mass struggles in Britain, France and Belgium.

The social roots of the various facets of the radicalization are ignored and the workers movement is exempted from responsibility for responding to the tasks posed by all aspects of the oppression of the masses by capitalism.

9. The European document accords a great importance to what is called "the new vanguard of a mass character," and it defines "winning hegemony within this vanguard" as the present "tactic" for building the party.

We reject the schematic concept of three "tactics" for building the revolutionary party.

For a revolutionary organization that is still small, winning hegemony in the workers vanguard is not a tactic but rather a goal. And the IEC Majority tendency gets itself boxed into a contradiction when it anticipates a generalization of revolutionary crises but refuses to consider the possibility of the "tactic" of "organic growth" of our sections. Such a contradiction can only lead to a search for other forces and other means to resolve the crisis of leadership.

We also reject the document's positive assessment of the third "tactic," *entryism sui generis,* * an orientation that resulted in catastrophe for several European sections. This "tactic" stemmed from the same methodological errors that have today produced the "strategy of armed struggle" and the adaptation to the "new mass vanguard." **A general analysis was turned into a categorical prediction; a single "tactic for the period" was imposed on all sections;** when it was recognized that the political analysis that had originally served to justify the initiation of the

tactic was no longer valid, other justifications for continuing the "tactic" were found; and over time the tactic became transformed into a strategy for party building, rather than a tactic within the Leninist strategy for party building.

("entry of a special kind"−or deep entry in which national sections suppressed their public press and independent activity −in sharp distinction with the Canadian SEL-LSA long-term entry tactic into the CCF-NDP while however maintaining the public Trotskyist press with vigorous public independent outside activities -- Ed)*

The analysis of the period provides the basis for elaboration of our general line. But our concept of building the party is not one of applying a series of "tactics" which change according to the "period," as outlined in the IEC majority European document. **Such a rigid concept can disorient our sections and stand in the way of taking advantage of sudden turns and unforeseen developments such as doing fraction work inside Social Democratic organizations if a shift to the left and a substantial influx of new members occurs.** *(This comment would apply to the Canadian section's long-term strategy within its labor party as well as its assessment of growing Canadian nationalist sentiment, spectacularly within that same party with the appearance of the left-centrist "Waffle" caucus which directly challenged the existing NDP leadership, winning around 30% support −Web Ed.)*

T**o such schematic recipes for "tactics" we counterpose a unified strategy based on the dynamics of the mobilization of the working masses through advancing their class independence and strength the method of the transitional program.**

10. It is extremely important for building revolutionary parties in Europe today to understand that a broad layer of radicalized youth and growing layers of workers are escaping the direct control of the Stalinist and Social Democratic leaders of the working class. They constitute an "operative factor," a layer that is relatively open to revolutionary socialist ideas, a layer that can be a base for mobilizing even wider sectors of the population in actions. This broad radicalization permits us to demonstrate in practice the value of our program and our principled class-struggle methods of action.

11. But the IEC majority immediately and very superficially calls this a "vanguard." The notion of a "vanguard of a mass character" attempts to include elements as different from one another sociologically as radicalized student youth and radicalized workers, and elements as different from one another politically as Trotskyists, Maoists, anarchists, and various centrists. *(A similar debate occurred within the LSA in 1967 around the defection of the Engler-Rands faction − see the Crandall document below −Ed.)*

The elaboration of our political line becomes completely impossible if it doesn't take these differentiations into account from the beginning. For example, it is possible to hold demonstrations with Maoists on concrete issues, around concrete demands. But it is much more difficult to work with them in the trade unions, or even to jointly intervene in a reformist-led demonstration. It is easier to build a class-struggle trade-union tendency with politically unorganized workers than with Maoists or unorganized radical students.

12. **We must take into account both the power of the newly radicalized layers that can be mobilized in specific actions such as demonstrations and campus occupations, and all their weaknesses insofar as work toward our strategic objective of winning the leadership of the majority of the working class is concerned. This objective requires a correct orientation toward the mass workers organizations.** *(Again, echoing the documented experience of the LSA in explaining and defending its orientation to the NDP against the attacks of the emerging ultraleft RCT in the early 1970s − Web Ed.)*

Two symmetrical errors must be avoided. One is overestimating the hold which the reformist leaders of the working-class exercise over the masses of organized workers and failing to recognize and take advantage of the deep contradictions which exist between the ranks of the workers organizations and their bureaucratic misleaders (cf. the attitude of *En Marcha* toward work inside the Comisiones Obreras and their assertion that the "spontaneous consciousness" of the Spanish proletariat "is not in contradiction with either syndicalism or Stalinist reformism, but is in contradiction to communism." [see "The Crisis of the LCR and the *En Marcha* Split," IIDB, Vol. X, No. 24]) It is these contradictions we must exploit in our battle to win the day-to-day leadership of the struggles of our class.

The other error is underestimating the hold and pressure which these same reformist leaderships exercise over the "new vanguard of a mass character," pressures which can lead that "vanguard" (and our forces along with them) to adapt to the Stalinists and Social Democrats (cf. the position of the Ligue Communiste *(French section)* toward the Union of the Left at the time of the March 1973 elections).

Both errors produce the same result: abdication of our responsibility to combat the reformist leaderships of the working class on a day-to-day, struggle-by-struggle basis, turning over the leadership of the immediate battles of the class to the reformists, and substituting the mobilization of the "vanguard" in action for the need to advance the independent mobilization of the class.

13. The programmatic basis on which we are struggling to win hegemony in the "vanguard" remains extremely vague in the IEC majority resolution. Apart from workers control, which risks being transformed into a fetish, the European document contains very few immediate, democratic or transitional demands. For example, the key demand of a workers (and farmers) government is treated very superficially, although *(its being)* concretized according to the specific conditions in each country it is centrally important for several sections in the period ahead.

There is a vast gulf between the present situation and a revolutionary crisis and a situation of dual power. The comrades who ask, "How should we carry out work in the trade unions?" or "What principles should the platform of a trade-union tendency be based on?" or "Do we need a combat program for the sections today? If so, what questions should be included in it?" will find very little in the way of answers in the European document.

14. In the European document our central task is defined as winning hegemony in the "new vanguard," rather than winning the leadership of the class. (Leadership of the class will be

achieved at a later stage through the dramatic actions that this "vanguard" under our hegemony will engage in.) This reduces our strategic task of building a mass Leninist party capable of leading the workers movement to little more than an ideological reference. This leads the IEC majority to consider what it calls the "vanguard of a mass character" in isolation from the masses that a genuine vanguard must be capable of winning over. **In this sense, the IEC majority sees our relationship to the radicalized youth and workers as a tactic, a lever or instrument to use to get around the reformist leaderships. The risk of becoming blind to the "vanguard's" limitations and of gradually adapting to these limitations is great as has already been seen in relationship to economism, Guevaraism, the Vietnam accords, the Union of the Left, etc.**

15. This adaptation has shown itself very clearly in several incorrect concepts of the IEC majority.

a. **The fact that it advocates national campaigns "corresponding to the concerns of the vanguard."** This has already led to obvious errors in Irish work, in Vietnam work, in Chile solidarity work (cf. "The Test of Ireland," by Gerry Foley, IIDB, Vol. X, No. 17; "How the 'Ninth World Congress Turn' Misdirected the Work of the IMG," by Alan Harris, IIDB, Vol. X, No. 23; "A Criticism of the United Secretariat Majority draft Resolution on 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," by Mary-Alice Waters, IIDB, Vol. X, No. 3) and has frequently hampered the building of movements based on the objective needs of the masses and the objective needs of the class struggle. This erroneous course can only become deepened now that Comrade Frank has explained that the subjective '"concerns' of the vanguard are the needs of the masses" in Europe today.

b. In more general terms, this leads to a propagandistic, maximalist approach to the class struggle that can only appear abstract except in rather restricted politicized circles. An example of this is the 1973 election campaign of the ex-Ligue Communiste, which was focused almost exclusively around explaining "there is no peaceful road to socialism," rather than centering on a rounded program to answer the objective needs of the class struggle, including immediate and democratic as well as transitional demands that could facilitate moving toward a workers government. **This approach, which by definition can only influence a "vanguard," while failing to educate it concerning the task of winning the leadership of the class through the method of the transitional program, is called the "line of building the organization"** (probably in the first stage).

c. The simplistic and therefore misleading theory of "unity in action outflanking" which in most cases (when we see the political components which take part in this) means unity in action with other organizations which are labeled "leftist."

It is clear that in many cases it is important to seek unity in action, even if limited to "leftists," in order to be able to outflank the reformist leaders of the mass (organizations) and campaigns on specific demands.

But the goal of such demonstrations and actions organized together with other far-left groups must be to strengthen and advance the unification and independent mobilization of

the working class on the basis of our program, which is the only program that expresses the interests of the class, and to advance the construction of the revolutionary party, which is the only way that program can be defended.

If "Unity in action − outflanking" becomes transformed into a ***strategy*** for party building, a "privileged orientation" justified by "an analysis of the period," it can be put into practice only at the cost of adapting to opponent currents with whom we differ on precisely the central objective − advancing the line of class-against-class, educating the working class to recognize and oppose all forms of class collaboration, unifying and mobilizing the entire class in action on the basis of our class-struggle program.

We must also reject any oversimplified schema of being able to outflank the reformist leaders of the mass organizations of the working class. We cannot simply go around them. We must replace them as the leadership of the day-to-day battles of the class.

To achieve this, a correct concept of the united front is indispensable.

The platform on which united action is to be organized must take the following considerations into account:

− it must be based on the objective needs of the class struggle;

− it must try to make its goals and demands understandable to the masses who still have illusions in their reformist leaderships even if the masses do not agree or participate in the beginning.

Above all we must avoid the approach: "There aren't very many people here; apart from us there's only the Maoists and other far-left currents. Let's bring out our full, maximum program and march under the slogan 'The only solution: Revolution!'"

This was precisely the error that marked our Chile solidarity campaign in several countries. As Comrade Tariq Ali stressed in his description of the November 4, 1973, Chile solidarity demonstration in London, "Our main intervention was based on the following chants or slogans: 'Armed Road, Only Road,' 'One Solution, Revolution'" (*Intercontinental Press,* December 17, 1973).

Such a maximalist approach in effect abdicates the struggle for leadership of the day-to-day battles of the working masses and leaves them in the hands of the reformists. It reflects an inability to work out a program to combat the reformist leaders, a search for a fast route to "outflank" them.

We must convince the most politically conscious layers that the goal is not to mobilize a vanguard separate from the class, but to mobilize the working class under the leadership of the mass revolutionary Marxist party around a system of demands that provides a bridge from the present to the program of the socialist revolution. This implies unremitting political battle against those who would substitute their own consciousness and concerns for those of the masses, against those who believe that mobilizing the vanguard is sufficient.

d. "Exemplary actions" and "minority violence."

The term "exemplary action" is used by the IEC majority to obscure and confuse two politically incompatible orientations. It includes politically correct initiatives which point the way forward for the masses of the working class such as the "exemplary" action taken by the Lip workers or the building of the antiwar movement in the United States. But on the other hand it is also used by the IEC majority to refer to actions which are in no way based on a conception of leading the mobilization of the class and its allies in struggle. This includes actions such as throwing Molotov cocktails at the Argentine embassy in Paris at the time of the Trelew massacre, or the kidnapping and execution of Sallustro. **Through Comrade Pierre Frank's document, the comrades of the IEC majority have now explained that in their view such actions are of vital importance in raising the level of consciousness of the masses.** *(Contrast this with the LSA/LSO's patient explaining to the Quebec Left that the terrorist actions of the FLQ not only failed to lift class consciousness but subjected the left and workers' movement to mass arrests and an armed occupation by the federal military −see LSA archives 1970 − Web Ed.)*

16. The IEC majority's errors taken as a whole including their interrelated errors on the "new vanguard of a mass character" and downplaying the strategic task of winning leadership of the working class have led the IEC majority to revise (at least in practice) the two fundamental points of Trotskyism: the method of the transitional program and the Leninist strategy for building the revolutionary party.

17. The method of the transitional program which consists in raising the level of consciousness of the masses through their own experiences tends to be replaced by the method of exemplary actions, actions taken by revolutionists outside the mass movement. The masses, reduced to the role of spectators, are supposedly "educated" by these examples and "stimulated" into action.

We reject this "spectacular action" theory of winning the leadership of the class. It tends to substitute the techniques of minority "initiatives" especially the need for "minority violence" for a program enabling us to confront and replace the reformist leadership of the class. It tends to substitute technical, organizational "tactics" for political program.

Insofar as Latin America is concerned, this tendency is very clear in the "strategy of armed struggle" and armed propaganda. The line of the last world congress tends to reduce the Marxist program to the need for armed struggle to which everything else in the program is subordinated.

As the example of Chile has once more tragically demonstrated, even where sectors of the working class are armed, the revolutionary will and combativity of the masses will time and again be betrayed until a mass revolutionary Marxist party is capable of politically destroying the reformist leadership and replacing it.

As a minority of the delegates at the last world congress feared, the errors underlying the Latin American orientation were not limited to Latin America. The theories on "minority violence" in Europe prove this. But the consequences of abandoning the method of the transitional program

are not simply limited to this. The IEC majority's concept of national campaigns corresponding to the concerns of the vanguard results in an inability to build and lead movements based on the objective needs of the masses.

18. The IEC majority now openly asserts a theory of building the revolutionary party in two stages: first winning leadership over the "vanguard" by orienting to its concerns; then the masses. Implied in this is also a theory of two programs a maximum program for the "vanguard" (workers control, dual power, armed struggle, only solution − revolution), and as yet-to-be-worked-out program for the working class (since that is a later stage).

It is clear by virtue of the very nature of our organizations and their type of activity that winning a vanguard of the working class to our banner is part of the struggle to win the leadership of the majority of the working class. But this vanguard must be won by proving through action as well as propaganda that we have the best program, the best strategy, and the best tactics for winning the leadership of the masses and for leading struggles to victory. The best elements of the vanguard must be won to our sections by systematically educating them in our program which is oriented to the masses. **The fact that the IEC majority sees our program for winning the "vanguard of a mass character" as separate from a program for the masses, gives rise to a very clear tendency of the following type: "through tactical initiatives in the vanguard (exemplary actions, minority violence, campaigns around the concerns of the vanguard) let's first build organizations of the size of the ex-Ligue Communiste; we'll take up the strategy for winning over the masses later on."** In doing this, we arrive at an incorrect concept of the relationship between our sections and other politically advanced elements, and of the relationship between our sections and the masses. We thus arrive at two politically distinct steps in building the revolutionary party. The danger in doing this lies in the fact that we cut ourselves off from possibilities of leading the working masses, leaving their day-to-day struggles in the hands of the reformist and centrist forces, and run the risk of remaining forever in the "first stage."

19. The line of the IEC majority is a line of adaptation to the political moods of the "vanguard of a mass character." The clearest signs of this are the ultraleft errors we've been making for a long time: guerrilla warfare in Latin America, the errors in Irish work, Vietnam work, minority violence, etc.

The June 21 demonstration called by the ex-Ligue Communiste proves this completely. As Comrade Joe Hansen explains in his document "The Underlying Differences in Method," (IIDB, Vol X, No. 12) it was correct to organize an action in response to the fascist-racist offensive. However, the character of the June 21 demonstration was determined not by the objective of mobilizing the working class and its organizations to answer the fascist offensive, but, as the "22 Theses" adopted by the Third Congress of the Ligue Communiste explicitly states, the antifascist policy of the Ligue was based on the concept of "minority violence," on the supposed need to reintroduce violence in the class struggle.

The adaptation to the political moods and concerns of the "new mass vanguard" is not limited to ultraleftism alone, however. There is an opportunist side of this adaptation also. In this sense the Ligue Communiste's error of calling for a vote for the Union of the Left (including the Left

Radicals) *(a demagogic petit-bourgeois party –Ed.)* complements the other series of errors perfectly. In making an ultraleft error of seeing the question of "armed struggle" (i.e., for or against the peaceful road to socialism) as the dividing line between revolutionists and non-revolutionists in the 1973 legislative elections, they missed the real class dividing line. **Differentiation of ourselves from all those forces engaged in a class-collaborationist maneuver and therefore rejecting a vote for the Union of the Left should have been the basis of our intervention in the elections.**

20. To our criticisms supporters of the IEC majority have retorted: "Where is your alternative?" We have no intention of presenting an alternative of the same nature as the European document. We do not intend to write a document with a dogmatic prognosis for all Europe, a document that makes an abstraction of all the differences between the various countries and fails to situate capitalist Europe in its world context. Nor will we write a document prescribing a series of tactics for all the European sections.

The discussion on Europe throughout the ranks of the International, including its European sections, began only a few months ago, and on the basis of a document that has greatly obscured rather than clarified the problems and perspectives facing European Trotskyists. Out of the fruitful discussion and collective elaboration now under way, a document presenting the general lines of a correct analysis and orientation will emerge. This is a process we intend to contribute to both internationally and on the level of our national sections.

December 12, 1973
Marcel, LRT (Belgium) Tony Roberts, IMG (Britain) Torben Hansen, RSF (Denmark) Dieter, GIM (Germany) Anders Svedin, RMF (Sweden) Mary-Alice Waters, SWP (U.S.)

(What follows is the 1967 debate on this subject, within the Young Socialists, the autonomous youth group in solidarity with the LSA/LSO –Original in W17-YS-1967-07JulyF-1 –Ed.)

IN REPLY TO COMRADE FRAZER
(By J. Crandall) *(John R.)* (DB Vol. 3 No. 11 July 1967)

(All emphasis by the author)

In her "Contribution to the Discussion of the Political Resolution", comrade Frazer (Jean R.) has raised some important ideas and has laid the groundwork for a fine discussion at the convention. In this contribution I would like to take up some of the questions she raises with a view towards some clarification of the main ideas under discussion as we go into the convention.

Comrade Frazer has raised important criticisms of the general direction projected in the Draft Political Resolution (PR). She puts forward a very significant proposal: that the newly-launched open movement should call for the formation by all radical youth tendencies of a federated youth movement, which would support the NDP.

Comrade Frazer supports the call of the PR for an open organization. But she sees three

specific dangers in applying this decision. First, she says, "when the working class is relatively quiet, the NDP is conservative, and the NDY (New Democratic Youth) practically dead, it is particularly difficult to explain our working class orientation to youth." Second, where the PR sees a vacuum on the left affording us a unique opportunity to win youth directly to ourselves, comrade Frazer warns that this "lack of an organization which includes the whole youth left (as the YND once did) mainly increases our isolation, both from young radicals and from youth generally," In comrade Frazer's opinion, there is an identifiable vanguard of radical youth in Canada, toward which we should orient. Furthermore, "in terms of recruitment, the most important section of the vanguard consists of the other political tendencies and their periphery - particularly the CP youth and the new left." Thirdly, she claims, "the desire for unity of radical youth is widespread", and "our establishment of a public organization could appear as a further division of the left."

In the light of these considerations she proposes that "our objective in launching an open organization should be to establish a dialogue with other tendencies in the youth left and to cut across the red-baiting of the NDY right wing."

Specifically, comrade Frazer proposes we call for a federated youth movement to support the NDP, (in a recent letter, Frazer amends this to "federated youth movement affiliated to the NDP") to include all left youth tendencies in Canada. This movement would lead united action on the whole range of political activities: student struggles, antiwar actions, strike support action, etc.

On Presenting Our Working Class Orientation

Comrade Frazer's proposal for a federated youth movement is aimed first at overcoming the problem of making the working class political perspective understandable to youth. She points out how the decline of the NDY has shoved this question to the fore. But of course this problem is even more deeply rooted. Even at its best the NDY was a poor substitute for a viable NDP youth movement - it was never activist, never had a broadly based membership, and from the start was plagued with a permanent witch hunt against the left. And the NDP itself, in spite of its strength and broad social base, is not very attractive to radical youth at present - not after they catch the smell of it's right wing program and bureaucratic organization.

Frazer's original proposal, as it appears in the document, calls for a movement which will **support** the NDP - but not, necessarily, be a constituent part of it. This would hardly solve the problem of opening the road of working class politics to youth. The YS, for example, supports the NDP, but is excluded from it - and a similar fate would surely befall Frazer's federated movement. She has since clarified that her proposal refers to a movement which, through affiliation, would be organically linked to the NDP - would be in fact the NDP youth movement.

Frazer admits herself that the NDP leadership will not agree to such a proposal. They

would hardly look with favor on allowing a grab-bag of socialist tendencies including ourselves to federate into the party or acquire a dominant position in the youth. They have made it clear that they will only permit an NDP youth organization that is under their control -- and they are not particularly interested in building **any** kind of activist youth movement at this time.

Surely to mobilize the socialist tendencies for a federated autonomous NDY is an exercise in futility. Its only result will be to show up the NDP leadership once more in the eyes of these radicals. But our whole problem, the whole problem that Frazer describes is that radical youth are only too aware of the conservativeness of the NDP, and too inclined to conclude that there is no role for them in it. If we were to persuade them to approach the NDP for a federated autonomous youth movement, the reception they would receive would only reinforce their conviction that to speak of radical action through the NDP and the unions is a romantic fantasy. We must find ways to link up their struggles with the struggles of labour. Neither the NDY nor any substitute for it offers this perspective at this time. We need to seek roads to the labour movement that evade the dead-end of NDY politics. We can find, for example, opportunities to mobilize youth directly in support of labour struggles, or in opposition to the victimization of labour leaders. We can carry support actions for the NDP independent of the bureaucracy -- for example, by mobilizing youth in election campaigns in a specific riding where our participation will be welcome, or even by making ourselves a coordinating and social center for youth working in ridings across the city. Such actions can be done independently or on a united front basis. We can greet and move into any initiative of the right wing leadership to revive its youth work. And, of course, we must maintain the key position of the NDP in our socialist propaganda.

But while the NDP orientation will continue to play a key role in our work, we should not waste too much time weeping over the NDY. We cannot create a mass NDY, whatever we do. And while the decline of the NDY poses problems, it also poses tremendous opportunities for us, taken together with the weakness of other tendencies it poses tremendous opportunities for us, which our open movement can meet in coming months.

An Orientation to the Vanguard?

Comrade Frazer's proposal would orient us to the vanguard of youth to be found, in her opinion, in and around the radical youth tendencies. It is of course true to say that we are orienting to a "vanguard", in the sense that we aim to recruit the most advanced and most radical youth into our organization. But our experience across Canada does not bear out Frazer s opinion that the most important section of the "vanguard" can be found in other political tendencies and their periphery.

The statements of the Political Resolution about a "vacuum on the left" do not imply the absence of opponent tendencies. It does describe the relative weakness of these tendencies. None of them has built a cohesive Canada-wide organization. In spite of the superficial appeal of their politics to many radical youth, none of them has succeeded in organizing substantial numbers of youth, or in building a substantial cadre. None of them contain any substantial left-ward moving forces. As comrade Jansson put it, these tendencies are reputations rather than organizations. The over whelming majority of youth who have become involved in radical politics have not attached themselves to any tendency. We even find organized groupings of uncommitted radicals (like the Halifax League for Social Action or the Vancouver "Internationalists." And even more, we find youth who have come in contact with radical politics but have not found the road to organized involvement in any grouping or movement. We cannot yet match the reputation of our opponents -- a reputation which derives in part from history (e.g., the CP), in part from the policies of the mass media (e.g.. the new left), in part from our own lack of an open organization. But as the PR points out, we are in a stronger competitive position in terms not only of our program but of our organizational strength. Far from appearing as just one more radical youth tendency, we will be the only tendency with a Canada-wide organization, with a program of any description, with a well known nationally-circulated publication.

For six years the YS has worked primarily within other movements - first the NDY *(New Democratic {Party} Youth*), more recently the antiwar movement. With the growth of our forces and the decline of the NDY, the time has clearly come for the launching of our open movement. But the PR goes a step further than this. Because of the "vacuum on the left", the PR states our open organization can be not merely one of several competing political tendencies, but the predominant organization of young socialists in Canada. While this situation persists, we can take advantage of the vacuum to attract radicalizing youth, past the other tendencies, directly to ourselves.

This means that the primary orientation of the open YS will not be to radicals in other tendencies, but to uncommitted youth. It means that we must take upon ourselves the task of the basic socialist propaganda among radicalizing youth. It means that the majority of our contacts, as they have in the past period, will come to us without any previous commitment to another radical tendency. If the open YS moves to open a dialogue with opponent tendencies, this will not be its top priority. The main purpose will be to take advantage of their present disarray to establish and strengthen our hegemony as "the Young Socialists" of Canada.

The Problem of Unity of the Left

Frazer comments on "the frustration and cynicism of student radicals around the fragmentation of the left" and their widespread desire for unity of the left. Surely we are all familiar with the near-universal distaste of young radicals for splits and sectarianism, and their desire for unity. Even if the problem of reaching out to supporters of opponent tendencies is not primary, we must have an answer to the question of unity, to give to all those who come around our movement. The answer comrade Frazer proposes to give is the call for a federated youth movement.

This is a subject to be approached with great caution. (We) are by no means unconditionally in favor of the organic unity of all radical tendencies in one movement. We recognize that our program and the program of the reformist and Stalinist tendencies are pulling in opposite directions: toward revolution and towards mobilizing the workers in support of capitalism. Our historic task, as we know, is the construction of independent revolutionary parties, winning away the advanced workers from class collaborationist leaderships. We are in favor of the united action of the working class - but only exceptionally of their unity in one organization. We work for united fronts of the working class, of the radical movement, through which the revolutionaries can maintain their independence, their freedom of criticism. We are also in favor of the separate organization of revolutionaries in parties with full Marxist programs.

We have advocated and worked for the NDP, and its youth section the NDY, because, as Canada's labour party, the NDP is a necessary and progressive step by the Canadian working class to class consciousness. Even here, the NDP is a stage in the development of political consciousness of Canadian workers. With the radicalization of the working class, we will work to pull the politicized workers away from the NDP's reformist leadership and a revolutionary alternative, and thus lay the groundwork for building a revolutionary party here in Canada. All this is familiar to us all. But it is worth re-emphasizing that the only political movement we are interested in building, other than ourselves, is the NDP. We must also remember that our NDP orientation does not imply an identical orientation to the NDY. The NDY is not a mass movement. It does not contain the vanguard of radical youth. It is not certain -- it not even likely that the radicalization of youth will occur through the NDY. Today, as a federal organization it does not even exist! As the Political Resolution points out, the nature of our support for the NDY, or a parallel formation, is highly conditional on the NDY's strength, direction, and many other factors.

As we have seen, Frazer's proposal makes little sense as an initiative to building an NDP youth movement. How does it rate as a means of explaining and popularizing our position on the need for unity in action of the left. Our movement has had a good deal of experience in dealing with this question. One example is that of the regroupment experience following the shake-up of Stalinism in 1956. At that time we saw, in a number of countries, large numbers of ex-CPers moving to the left, pulling away from the anti-Trotskyist bogies, and taking a stand, among other things, for unity of the left. It is instructive to see how we went about approaching these radicals. We specifically did **not propose** an all-inclusive socialist party. The Socialist Workers Party

(USA, co-thinkers of the LSA -ed.) summed up its approach to regroupment as follows:

"The Socialist Workers Party had the distinct merit of knowing what it hoped to achieve in the regroupment. Its position was presented for public consideration at the outset of the shake-up ... in a pamphlet, 'Regroupment: A Programmatic Basis for Discussion of Socialist Unity.'

"The statement contained three main points. (1) It emphasized the SWP's willingness to engage in full and frank discussion on any questions of concern to the socialist movement with anyone interested in reorganizing the revolutionary socialist forces. (2) It set forth a twelve-point program as its contribution to this discussion. (3) It proposed that where agreement on specific issues could be reached, common actions should be taken as indispensable preparation for any more advanced organizational conclusions to the regroupment process."

The SWP knew what it was trying to do: to win these drifting radicals to the program of Trotskyism - through individual recruitment or through fusion with whatever revolutionary tendency might develop. They proposed a programmatic discussion and united-front common actions - but they did not present a federation of the left as either possible or desirable. At the end of this statement, the SWP enumerated the possibilities for radicals: enter the fold of the CP, the social democracy, the Democratic Party, sit on the sidelines, or - the real alternative - work with or join the SWP.

Where does Frazer's proposal fit into this approach? The "Federation" is no united front on specific issues. Its joint activities span the whole range of radical action: united discussion - but also initiation and carrying of the student struggles, of youth action against the Vietnam war, of support for labour struggles, etc. It is, as she correctly terms it, a "Movement", leading youth action on all issues. If there were some realistic possibility of building a broad democratic activist NDY at this time, such a proposal would be merely a restatement of the slogan "Join and build the NDY." But the road of the NDY is now closed off - and almost all radicals know it - and the logic of the proposal leads in a different direction.

What our contacts and opponents will tend to see in the Frazer proposal is above all the concept of bringing all the rival youth tendencies into a common movement with a common minimum program of action. Given the absence of a mass NDY, this is the last thing we want today. Such a movement, if it ever materialized, would force us to subordinate our independent actions to all the whims and failings of our opponents, subordinating our activity to the difficult task of holding the fragile coalition together, and working to build an organization which would in fact be a substitute for a revolutionary socialist youth movement. Far from opening the door to the radicalizing layers of youth, it would throw us in a cage with the disoriented, rotten, discredited and isolated groupings that masquerade under the political labels of Maoism, Communism, the new left and the NDP. As the Political Resolution states, we are not going to waste our time building a centrist hodgepodge. A "federated youth movement" of this type is the last thing we want and the last thing comrade Frazer would advocate. But in a certain sense, there are indications that this is the direction her proposal tends to lead us in.

Frazer's proposal tends to approach the whole problem backwards. Rather than open the dialogue with programmatic proposals, and proposals for united front action, she wishes to open it with a call for organic unity - with no programmatic preconditions! - except the impossible one of being part of the NDP. We are to propose that a federated movement undertake the whole range of public actions of the youth left - with no prior discussion of the program such an organization is to have!

A number of organizations and tendencies who have raised proposals akin to this: organizational unity without programmatic agreement. Numerous elements of the new left call for "federated politics" -- that all tendencies should join in united action, and let the program

evolve out of experience. The CP wants to found a united movement of "progressive youth", with a minimum program. The *Canadian Dimension* group looks to a united movement whose only programmatic commitment is to Canadian independence. NDY centrists see the NDY as an all-inclusive movement - based upon programmatic subordination to the NDP.

The question of program is the nub of our quarrel with these tendencies. We reject the concept of the new left that elaboration of a program will come naturally out of organizing experience. We reject the position of those who would dump the programmatic struggle in the NDP and NDY. We refuse to subordinate program to organizational unity. Our proposal on the question of unity of the left must be such as to raise the question of program to the fore, and to give us experience in common actions with the rank and file of other tendencies without weakening our independent existence.

The Unity Proposal of the Communist Party

The question of the unity of the left has been concretely posed before the Convention by the initiative of the Communist Party in calling for the formation of an all-inclusive radical youth organization with a minimum program acceptable to various tendencies. It is not yet clear just what kind of organization they have in view. But in answering this call, I believe we must follow a direction quite close to that of the SWP and SEL in "regroupment" after 1956. First, we should unequivocally welcome this call for unity and dialogue on the left, and state our desire to participate in the dialogue in united actions. (We should at the same time strongly protest the exclusionary procedure of the CP in excluding us from their Montreal conference.) Secondly, we should present our own programmatic position for the consideration of participants in such a discussion -- perhaps in the form of a critique of the CP's programmatic proposals contained in the *Canadian Tribune (the CP's journal - Ed.)*. Thirdly, we should propose and stand ready to participate in united front actions of the left. A vast spectrum of issues exist for such proposals - from united antiwar actions to united campaigns for student democracy. (Our advocacy of such united front action should not, however, be permitted to stand in the way of the unfolding of our own program of open activities.)

We need take no position on whether a united **movement** is advisable until specific proposals are put forward, and the launching of such a movement takes shape.

The participation of our U.S. co-thinkers in the foundation of the Du Bois Clubs in 1964 is an example of how this can be done. Youth elements around the CP put out a call for a conference of progressive youth to found a new, united, broad, militant youth movement, independent of all adult political parties. It was obvious to our comrades that the call was a sham, a smoke-screen for the foundation of a CP-controlled youth group. Rather (than) publicly write off the conference in advance, they took no position, waiting to see what kind of program and organization the conference would produce. A large YSA contingent was therefore able to attend, and to rally a left tendency, force the CPers into a series of undemocratic maneuvers, and finally into an exclusionist measure which led to the walk-out of the YSAers together with all the best forces.

If a genuine dialogue among left tendencies develops, we will have no difficulty showing why the kind of unity and the kind of organization the CP and new left advocate will not advance the cause of socialism. Ultimately the only united movement we can advocate is the NDP-NDY. Barring that, we must stand by the need for united **action**, and organizational unity of the **revolutionary socialists** under the banner of the YS and LJS.

2B) The New Zealand Trotskyists and the protest movement against the war in Vietnam, by George Fyson *(a leading member of the N.Z. section - Ed.)*

(International Internal Discussion Bulletin Vol. XI No. 3 −January 1974)

(------* Text emphasis by the Ed.)*

The debate on Indochina and the antiwar movement is an important issue in the international discussion, as the IEC Majority Tendency emphasized by placing the article "The Debate on Indochina," by Sterne, as one of their five central documents for translation and distribution prior to the world congress. A discussion of the issues involved in building the international antiwar movement is particularly valuable because it relates to the question of how a comparatively small group of revolutionists can exercise a major influence in the defence of a revolution in another country, and in the process win recruits to Trotskyism.

In New Zealand, we in the Socialist Action League feel that we have had a particular success in this regard. In fact, for a period of three years from the time of the League's founding in August 1969, antiwar work was our single most important activity, and it was the area from which nearly every new recruit came. This article aims to explain the success of our antiwar work, and to reply to the criticisms directed against our line in the antiwar movement by the IEC majority comrades.

Two Different Antiwar Movements, One Inside and One Outside North America?

What we took to be the official line of the Fourth International at the time of the League's founding was contained in the Political Report to the December 1969 IEC meeting, by Ernest Germain **Ernest Mandel**. *(IIDB,* Vol. VIII, No. 1, January 1971). In this report Comrade Germain expressed the view that the international antiwar movement consisted of two parts — that inside the United States, and that in other countries. In the United States, he said, revolutionists should build a mass movement for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. armed forces, but in other countries "they have to identify themselves clearly and fully with the South Vietnamese revolution; and they have to try to do this not only in words but also through certain specific forms of struggle that indicate clearly they are

revolutionists and not reformists or pacifists. That is why most of the sections of the Fourth International outside of the U.S. have correctly taken the lead in using slogans like 'Victory to the NLF', 'Victory to the Vietnamese Revolution', and giving the antiwar movement as militant forms of activity as possible." This is because, says Germain, in countries other than the U.S., "There does not exist any possibility of making an immediate direct contribution to the victory of the South Vietnamese revolution, except by making an immediate victorious socialist revolution in their own country."

In 1969, Germain still hesitated to make a blanket prescription of this approach for all countries outside the U.S., allowing "the possible exception of those countries that have sent soldiers themselves to Vietnam (and in view of the limited size of these contingents, not even that is absolutely certain)." So, for Trotskyists in countries such as New Zealand and Australia, there was no clear orientation. However, more recently, Germain and other leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency have shifted much further in the direction of advocating a "Victory to the NLF" orientation for every country outside the U.S., and even calling into question the "Out Now" strategy there.

The New Zealand Antiwar Movement

The contingent of New Zealand troops in Vietnam was very small —never more than a few hundred men —but it was of far greater political significance than its size. The contingents from New Zealand and Australia in particular were utilised in the United States and elsewhere to bolster the myth that the war was one of the "free world" against "Communist aggression."

In this country the Trotskyists saw that a withdrawal of New Zealand troops and other forms of governmental support for the war would have a similar political effect, in the reverse direction. Such a withdrawal would show the world that the Australian and New Zealand people did not feel themselves threatened by any "Communist aggression" and that they wanted to dissociate themselves from the U.S. war against the Vietnamese. This step, in our opinion, would play a not unimportant part in helping turn millions of people throughout the world and inside the United States itself against the imperialist war.

To this end we exerted ourselves to help generate the most powerful display of opposition within New Zealand, by building a mass movement demanding that the United States and its "allies" withdraw totally and immediately from South East Asia, and that all forms of N.Z. support to the war be stopped. This "Out Now" strategy was both the necessary and the sufficient basis for the most effective defence of the Vietnamese revolution.

The vast majority of those who were drawn into activity around this demand were not conscious revolutionists or even "anti-imperialists," though undoubtedly most of them were radicalised to varying degrees through participating in the mass mobilizations. In 1971, on two occasions, over 30,000 New Zealanders marched in the streets demanding an immediate New Zealand and U.S. withdrawal from Indochina — probably the largest protest demonstrations ever seen in this small country. Two weeks after the second of these protests the National government announced that New Zealand's troops were to be withdrawn from Vietnam.

Despite this withdrawal, New Zealand support for the war continued in the form of recognition of the Thieu puppet regime, membership of the aggressive SEATO, ANZUS and other treaties which legitimise the U.S. military presence in South East Asia, and the maintenance of an N.Z. Army training unit in South Vietnam. A further mobilisation demanding a total end to New Zealand support for the war and immediate U.S. withdrawal from South East Asia was held in July 1972, with a similarly massive turnout to the 1971 marches.

In New Zealand, contrary to what Comrade Germain asserted in 1969, there existed the "possibility of making an immediate direct contribution to the victory of the South Vietnamese revolution." All the New Zealand troops were eventually withdrawn; the antiwar movement and its success were an inspiration to antiwar activists internationally (especially in the United States); and the mass protests laid the basis for other direct action against the United States and its war backers, such as the N.Z. Seamen's Union strike in support of the antiwar mobilisation on April 30, 1971, and the Australian maritime boycott in December 1972.

Our first priority was not to demarcate the "revolutionaries" from the reformists, the pro-Moscow Stalinists and the pacifists, by promoting the "most militant" slogans and forms of activity, as Comrade Germain would have it, but to try and unite all these diverse forces into meaningful political action. This is what the antiwar mobilisations did: they forced ever wider sections of the Labour Party and the trade union movement to give their support, it drew in significant sections of the churches, and it even forced the participation of the little groups of ultra-lefts and the super-sectarians (such as the Mao-Stalinist N.Z. Communist Party, which denounced the mobilisations as "counter-revolutionary").

What *did* demarcate the revolutionists was that we were the most consistent proponents and builders of the mass mobilisations. To get the marches under way we had to fight tooth and nail against almost all the other tendencies from

pacifist through to ultraleft at different times, at the various national and local meetings of the antiwar coalitions. By far the strongest of these tendencies was that section of newly-radicalised youth, often under the influence of the Maoists, who wanted protest activity to be built around explicit "solidarity" slogans such as "Victory to the NLF." These people constituted the New Zealand component of Comrades Germain and Sterne's "vanguard," who regarded abstract proclamations of individual "solidarity" with the Vietnamese revolution as being far more important than the building of a mass antiwar movement. And often at the same time as these forces decried the "Out Now" slogans as being insufficiently"revolutionary," they equally opposed the tactic of peaceful marches, preferring "more militant" activities such as attempted confrontations with the police. The fact that such "more militant" sloganeering and activities could only serve to discourage mass participation in antiwar actions was completely irrelevant in their eyes. These "radical" witness-bearers were the ***rearguard*** of the antiwar activists.

There certainly was pressure on us to "tail-end" in the antiwar movement. However, it was not primarily pressure to adapt to the reformists, but rather to the ultra-lefts, whose opposition to mass marches and to the Socialist Action League's role in them at times reached a frenzied level. The hostility of some ultraleft forces to our consistency and our success drove them to acts of harassment and intimidation, a continuous slander campaign, and denunciation of us as "traitors" and "scabs." In order to build the most effective mass protests we often found ourselves, in Comrade Sterne's words, "going against the current of the 'natural' activity of the radicalised militants," or at least against a major section of them.

At times it may have been easier for us to give in to this pressure, particularly with the assistance of Comrade Germain's rationalisations, such as his discovery that "the duality of tactics between the comrades in North America and the comrades in the rest of the world is a result of (the) difference in the objective roots and function of the antiwar movement, as well as the difference in mass consciousness inside the antiwar movement in these two parts of the world." (Political Report to the December 1969 IEC.) If we had applied the orientation of Sterne and Germain there simply would have been no mass mobilisations against the war in this country in the 1970-72 period.

Was it a Crime to Learn from the SWP?

One of Comrade Sterne's "Four Criticisms of the SWP" is that they advocated "the extension of their NPAC policy to the entire International and [failed] to understand the specific nature of this policy." ("The Debate on Indochina," ***IIDB,*** Vol. X, No. 7, June 1973, page 14.) But as Comrade Geoff Mirelowitz pointed out in his article "The SWP's Role in the Antiwar Movement" ***(IIDB,*** Vol. X, No. 15, October 1973), the SWP did not insist that every move made by NPAC be

copied elsewhere in the world, but rather that the strategy of building a mass antiwar movement be a central part of the work of every section of the Fourth International.

In New Zealand we were inspired by the mass antiwar demonstrations in the U.S. as well as those elsewhere such as the march of 100,000 in London, in Oc tober 1968. In addition we learned a great deal from the methods of the SWP in building united front antiwar actions, and were able to apply much of it directly to our work in New Zealand. It is only to be regretted that these lessons have been rejected or ignored in other sections, as is indicated by Comrade Sterne.

Two Slogans —One for the "Vanguard" and One for the Masses?

In New Zealand we were charged by some forces on the left with not raising slogans such as "Victory to the NLF" in addition to "Out Now." Our critics, like Comrade Sterne, held the view that such slogans were necessary to meet "the needs of the advanced layers of the movement." Such a confused position was most often advanced by forces who were very much on the sidelines of the antiwar movement, but who wanted to somehow accommodate to both conflicting sides in the debate over the movement's central strategy. These armchair revolutionaries could not appreciate how the "Victory to the NLF" slogan contradicted the goal of building mass demonstrations. This has been clearly shown in Comrade Geoff Mirelowitz's contribution (*IIDB,* Vol. X, No. 15, page 33).

These critics also misunderstood how people become radicalised to the point where they explicitly support the Indochinese revolution. People involved in the protest movement are not radicalised by having an NLF flag or 'Victory" placard thrust into their hands, but by receiving clear explanations of the issues at stake in Vietnam and in the antiwar movement, and the relationship of these questions to broader issues. It is the role of the Trotskyist press to carry through this latter task, and we in New Zealand lived up to our responsibilities in this area. On every mass mobilisation, we sold several thousand copies of our newspaper, which featured material on the Vietnamese revolution. In addition we held educationals and forums, and distributed other socialist literature to antiwar activists. ***In this way we helped large numbers of people to come to consciously support the Vietnamese revolution and to adopt a socialist viewpoint in general, while at the same time understanding the need to build an effective mass united antiwar campaign on an "Out Now" basis. These people were the real vanguard of the N.Z. antiwar movement, many of whom are now members or sympathisers of the Socialist Action League.***

Effects of the Antiwar Movement in New Zealand

Through participating in the antiwar movement and coming into contact with radical ideas for the first time, thousands of young people were radicalised in New Zealand.

Vietnam and the mass antiwar movement here and overseas were central in bringing about a turn in the whole political situation in New Zealand, marking an end to the deep-seated anti-communist attitudes which had been predominant since the time of the Cold War. Support for imperialist wars is at its lowest level ever —which is significant in a country that has been heavily committed to such wars under both British and U.S. auspices for over one hundred years. The antiwar demonstrations popularised the concept of street protests and paved the way for militant action on an ever-widening range of issues. Just one indicator of this general shift to the left was the landslide election victory of the Labour Party in November 1972.

The antiwar movement was a test for the newly-established Trotskyist forces in New Zealand. And in our opinion we met the challenge and the opportunities before us. This is because we used the transitional approach in building the antiwar movement, based on making defensively-formulated principled demands, whose logic ultimately involved a revolutionary victory in Indochina, but which at the same time were able to bring into action the weight of significant numbers of workers, students and others. We adopted and adapted the "Out Now" strategy applied by the SWP comrades in the U.S.A., and rejected the alternative orientation of our ultraleft opponents in New Zealand and its "Trotskyist rationale" put forward by Comrade Germain in 1969 and now by the IEC Majority Tendency.

And as a result of our orientation in the antiwar movement, have we been bypassed by the radical vanguard, have we been politically discredited in the eyes of "advanced layers"? In the eyes of the IEC majority, probably so. But the facts speak otherwise.

It has been through our antiwar work that the New Zealand Trotskyists were able to expand from a tiny group based in one locality, publishing a mimeographed broadsheet, into a movement with national influence and organisation, with the widest-read radical paper in the country and a considerably enhanced standing among a broad layer of young activists, trade unionists and intellectuals.

While it is not unlikely that we could have sped up the pace of our growth in the short term at least, by accommodating to our radical opponents, it could only have been at the expense of programmatic clarity, by smoothing over fundamental disagreements, of which the "two-level" antiwar strategy is a classic example.

It has been this programmatic clarity that has won Socialist Action such a broad readership and the Socialist Action League a widespread, if in some circles begrudging, respect.

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Inside this Issue

The Relevance of Marxism Today

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Marxism arises from the accumulated intellectual heritage that was available to humanity in the 1800s. It was profoundly influenced by the philosophical heritage of Germany where Marx was born and raised, and in particular, by Hegel and Fuerbach from whom Marx inherited the philosophical concepts of dialectics and materialism; from France which, shortly before Marx's birth, had undergone a most significant political cataclysm in the form of the French Revolution and where Marx said that the class struggle always draws its clearest lines–from there he was influenced by the thinking of political theorists Fourier and Saint Simon; and England where the economic insights of Adam Smith, David Ricardo and Godwin had their influences on him. Marxism is therefore the synthesis of the highest level of developed philosophical, political and economic thought from Germany, France and England available in the 1800s.

Not a Dogma

Marxism represents a method of analysis and not a set of dogma. Those who fail to understand this proposition were ridiculed by Marx's famous dictum: If this is Marxism, then I am not a Marxist. Marxism provides an integrated way of analyzing the material world. For those of us who adhere to this method, its ongoing relevance is in many ways very apparent. Yet the theories of Karl Marx are under tremendous challenge at present. Of course, there has hardly ever been a time when they were not subject to challenge. But in the hoopla of the millenium celebrations at the start of this year, the relevance both of Karl Marx and his outlook was more systematically challenged then at any other time as the bourgeoisie took its own long view of history. While *Time Magazine* was not able to ignore Marx totally in its selection of the hundred people who had the greatest impact on the development of human history between the year 1000 A.D. and 2000 A.D., it placed Karl Marx far down the list and was cynical about his predictions. Was this wishful thinking or does an independent and impartial assessment of Marxist analysis confirm that reality has outpaced it? This is the fundamental issue that I wish to deal with today.

The scope of this talk is not something that can be curtailed with great ease. While I speak, I would like you to think of your own opinions on this topic and to explore them in the discussion that will follow. My comments will be more then introductory but they will be far from conclusive and more illustrative then thorough.

Marx's contributions fall into three broad categories: dialectical materialism, historical materialism and political economy. Marx linked the last two concepts, politics and economics, into one term and conceptualized these terms into an integrated whole in a way and to an extent that no one else had done prior to his doing so. He saw the relationship of the two to be so close that they could not even be separated as categories of thought.

A Materialistic View

Dialectical materialism provides a way of analyzing reality. It posits an existing real world that is independent of human perception, an objective world that can be observed and studied and which obeys laws. Marx said: all that is real is rational; all that is rational is real. Dialectic materialism can be reduced to two principles–things exist and are in constant motion. While it does not take a rocket scientist to realize that these are clear verities, it should be pointed out that these principles of science have been verified over and over again and never once challenged successfully. One need only look at the difficulty that scientists have had in reaching absolute zero–something scientists say can never be achieved, in order to see the verification of this philosophical approach in the scientific world. Absolute zero is the temperature at which all subatomic motion stops. While we have been able to approach less then one thousandths of a degree of this point of total absence of heat, which

is I believe approximately -273 degrees centigrade, we have not been able to design machines that can actually reach absolute zero. To do so would mean a total absence of heat which is a measure of motion. To achieve absolute zero, one would have to achieve a state of absence of motion. But reality is not static. Since everything that exists is in a state of transformation or motion, this point of frigid interia cannot be reached no matter what our technological capabilities might be because whatever arrives at this point would cease to exist. Electrons exhibit unusual behaviour as we approach absolute zero–they line up systematically in formation like soldiers after jumping out of their orbits in the atoms–but they still vibrate. Motion; i.e., heat, cannot disappear entirely without matter disappearing. This cannot happen because of the law of conservation of matter and energy which states that anything which has a material existence cannot either be created from or disappear into nothingness.

Dialectics–Change through Conflict

Dialectics focuses on the contradictory nature of evolution and change. Such change involves the negation of what exists by its opposite. The interaction of opposites–quality and quantity, revolution and evolution, idea and matter, working class and capitalist class–gives rise to a unity which constantly evolves from one position to the opposite position to a composition of the two–what Marx called a unity of opposites.

Marx first and foremost called himself a scientist, a person whose understanding was based on an analysis of reality, not on ideas or views sucked out of his thumb, as comrade Ross Dowson used to say. While some may consider the concept of dialectical materialism to be abstract and even irrelevant in daily life, it represents a critical aspect of Marx's world outlook. It means that human liberation must take place in the real world; that reality is lawful and ascertainable; that there will be no pie in the sky when you die; that religions represent false consciousness; that the universe was not created by a creator (if it was, who created the creator?) but has existed forever in one form or another, albeit always undergoing transformations, permutations and combinations; that the liberation of humanity must be the work of humanity itself and not that of a god; that gods were made in the image of humans, not the other way around; that humans are part of a natural world even though they exhibit the organic quality of life; that the laws of history are, in the ultimate analysis, a reflection of the laws of nature; that there is a dynamic development from the simple to the complex in the evolution of humanity as a species and the evolution of societies; that the laws of motion can be ascertained scientifically by observation and by the scientific method; that, as a generalization, although the law of atrophy applies, change in the real world spirals upward from primitive forms of organization to more structured and interconnected forms; that there is a pattern, but not a divine design, to the behavior of matter.

The principles of dialectical materialism are inherent in the practice of all sciences, whether medicine or cosmology. In the time since Marx died, there has not been a single discovery or scientific advance that has invalidated these principles of Marxist analysis. In fact, Marxist analysis has accelerated scientific inquiry in a wide variety of spheres from anthropology to psychology. This is not to say that efforts to invalidate Marx have not been made. Still, no doctor has discovered a place in the body for the repository of the soul. Scientific positions which fly in the face of dialectical materialism, such as cold fusion, have been devastated. The major philosophies which have developed or influenced large numbers since Marx's time, the philosophy of empiricism which denies the validity of generalities, the philosophy of existentialism which denies the lawfulness of the world and the philosophy of postmodern relativism which denies historical progress and celebrates uniqueness, have not made a dent in the methodology developed by Marx who so brilliantly synthesized the heritage of Heraclitus, Epicurus and Hegel. Notwithstanding the fact that science has been thwarted for use in wars, for oppression, even for torture, the scientific method itself retains its validity and cannot be challenged.

Marxist analysis enables Marxists to understand the direction and dynamic of a wide range of phenomena in motion. Its validity can be tested in a variety of spheres–but we will concern ourselves here only with its contribution to understanding human society.

Historical Materialism

Historical materialism represents the application of dialectical materialism to social evolution. Briefly stated, the development of technology is seen as fundamental to human progress. Adopting the evolutionary model used by Henry Louis Morgan, the founder of modern anthropology, whose terminology did not imply the ethnocentric bias these terms currently have in common usage, and influenced by the views of Briffault and Bachofen who first identified the original existing matriarchies in human prehistory prior to the development of writing 10,000 years ago, Marx and Engels divined three broad stages in the development of human society. Humans emerged from the animal world into savagery at the bottom of the scale of social evolution, then to barbarism and finally, through the various stages of civilization. Prehistory or primitive communism, as the era of savagery and barbarism became known, consisted first of hunting and gathering societies and second, of sedentary, agricultural societies. History; that is, class societies, as the era of civilization came to be known, witnessed three broad periods of technological evolution of the mode of production: slavery, feudalism and capitalism.

Although little or no physical evidence was available to support this analysis during Marx's life, he identified tool-making; i.e. labour-saving devices initially used to hunt and defend more efficiently as not only key to the development of human societies

through to civilization but also to the development of homo sapiens as a distinct physical species. It was not until the 1930s when the ethnologist Leakey of the Royal Ontario Museum discovered some of the earliest hominid links to apes in Eastern Africa (the "missing link") that the critical role of tools in the evolution of human beings from apes became an established and ascertained scientific fact. Leakey discovered that there was a vast accumulation of primitive stone tools where the earliest skeletal fossils of hominids were located. This discovery, which has now been repeated in different parts of the world in innumerable archeological excavations, confirmed beyond question that the development of the human species resulted from the use of tools made possible by the apposition of the thumb to the other four fingers, the development of bifocular vision and of upright gait. It was the ability to grasp a stone adze–remember *Space Odyssey 2001*–and to use it for protection and attack that began the course of the physical evolution of humanity as a distinct species.

Tools Key to Evolution

It was also the development of tools (the mode of production) that continued to spur the ongoing social development of humanity. Barbarism and savagery were divided into three stages each of which marked a fantastic advance in the technological voyage of humanity to the present. V. Gordon Childe in his book *Man Makes Himself*, Ashley Montagu and numerous other social or cultural anthropologists have documented this evolution: the discovery of fire which protected human beings and enabled them to preserve their food from decay; the discovery of pottery which enabled people to travel away from sources of water and far into the deserts; the development of animal husbandry and domestication of animals which enabled humanity to herd grazing animals that they could use to live on and eventually to breed; the all-important discovery of the hoeing stick which demarked the stage of evolution from savagery to barbarism and permitted communities to settle in one area instead of travelling in hunting and gathering societies as was the case under savagery, and the development of smelting which enabled humanity to develop tools that lasted and that could be used for grinding and shaping other tools. All these and dozens of other technological innovations were associated with an increased division of labour, an accumulation of surpluses on a more consistent basis, an increase in leisure and an extension of the human lifespan. The cultural evolution of humanity began one and a half to two million years ago and continued until ten thousand years ago when the original matriarchy and gens, which formed the basic tribal social unit of barbarism and, in a modified form, of savagery, gave way to the first slave societies and the birth of civilization in places such as the well-irrigated agricultural area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in what is now known as modern-day Iraq. In such places, for the first time, the social forms of matriarchy and matrilinity, of primitive communism, of usufructory rights, of sharing and of non-hierarchical decision-making structures collapsed with the birth of class society, of exploitation, of patriarchy, of private property, of class struggle, of the family as distinct from the clan, of patrilineal forms of inheritance and of the birth of art and science. Civilization based on regular agricultural surpluses also developed at the same time in Southeast Asia, Mesoamerica and Peru.

Prehistory

It is not within the scope of this presentation to go into detail with respect to the evolution of slave societies, feudal societies and capitalist societies. Suffice to say that these three broad categories of social organization developed over a period of ten thousand years with slave societies which reached their apex in Rome, Greece and Egypt finally collapsing under the weight of their own contradictions including overexpansion by 500 A.D. By the dawn of the age of Charles the Great, feudalism eclipsed slavery as the predominant social system, although in the Far East feudalism took on a longer-lasting Asian mode. About 550 years ago, with the birth of guilds, home industries and overseas markets in Europe, we saw generalized exchange and production for a market give rise to mercantile capitalism and soon predominate with advances in what Marx termed the primitive accumulation of capital.

Each of the three stages of social evolution of civilization was characterized by a distinct mode of production and by the preponderance of a ruling class or classes which owned the means of production, whether it was slaves, land or industrial machinery. The underclasses were locked in a class struggle with the ruling class, exploited first as chattel-slaves and then as land-slaves (serfs) and finally as wage-slaves (workers)). Each of these stages of social evolution was progressively shorter in duration and each exploited class more conscious, organized and centrally situated. Each of these economic systems encompassed long years of accumulated social development which were disrupted by the sudden reconstitution of the societies by the rise of slave, peasant and workers' revolts. This broad sweep represents the historical materialist view of Marxism.

Uneven Development

Marxism is not a scheme. Most of human history is spent in transition from one society to another and a mixture of different systems co-existed and still co-exist in much of the world, creating an unevenness in human techno-social evolution that Parvus and later Trotsky explicated in their elaboration of the Law of Combined and Uneven Development. This Law explained the development of such economic trends as imperialism. One third of the world saw capitalism develop into monopolistic forms which then ravaged the rest of the technologically undeveloped world through superexploitation in an avoracious search for raw materials, cheap labour and markets. It explained how technologically backward countries could leap over social stages or have their own evolution through cultural

diffusion and superexploitation by more highly developed countries. The most dramatic expression of such unevenness was the outbreak of workers power in one of the world's most backward countries, Russia, in 1917. There, the contradictions of class society resulted in what French Marxist philospher Althusser called "over-determination"– the superimposition of the conflicts of feudalism and capitalism. War, hunger and a failure to distribute the vast landed estates caused the tiny but concentrated, cultured and combative Russian workingclass, formed by massive imperialist investments of capital from Germany and France in Russia's resource sector to lead the dispossessed peasantry in a social upheaval which broke the imperialist chain at its weakest link, something which Marx foresaw as possible but did not expect. The socialist revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky failed to spread and this eventually isolated the revolution and caused it to degenerate. But the lessons learned there, especially the need for a revolutionary vanguard party, form part of the intellectual heritage of the revolutionary socialist movement worldwide.

Historical materialism offers a dynamic evolutionary *and* revolutionary model, one in which the analysis is based on the material world in all its variegated complexity. It provides a broad framework for understanding and analyzing the evolution of humanity to the present. It stands in sharp contrast to the functionalist analysis of social behaviour which is so often merely descriptive and offers only a limited understanding of conflict. It appreciates the contradictory nature of social reality and shows how a short historical period of class struggle and private ownership in human history, a mere 10,000 years (although a very bloody period full of conflict), is sandwiched between two other longer periods. It follows a very lengthy period of communalism or primitive communism forced on humanity by the need to share in order to survive and it precedes an advanced period of communism based on technological development to the point where humanity's material needs can be so fully realized that private ownership of the means of production becomes irrational. Thus, historically, class societies are an anomaly and exception in the natural cultural evolution of humanity, occupying only one intermediate rung on humanity's long climb from a communal classless past to a communal classless future.

Marxist Political Economy

The political economy of Marxism, the third category of Marx's work, is in some ways the most difficult to grasp but also the most important. After thirty years of studying the economic development of capitalism in England, Marx wrote his three volume *Das Kapital*, the most significant book in human history which ranks along his most influential pamphlet, *The Communist Manifesto*. This study, based on detailed, thorough and scientific research, inquired into the origins of capitalism in England and laid the basis for Marx's theory of political economy. It was at this point that Marx developed in depth many of the views and positions associated with his economic analysis: the theory of wage, labour and capital, and of value, price and profit. The fundamental contradiction in capitalist society was between the social or co-operative way in which we earn our living and the individual way that the products that we produce are appropriated by those who own the means of production: the factories, the land, the machinery. Social production on the one hand, individual appropriation on the other– this is the basic contradiction of capitalism. Capitalists thirst for profit. In order to make a profit, their commodities have to be sold; in order for commodities to be sold, there has to be a market; the market is the working class and other capitalists. The commodities are purchased with money which is, among other things, a means of exchange. Money comes to workers from wages and, to other capitalists, from profit which also ultimately derives from wages. In order to make a profit, the capitalist has to sell goods for an amount which is higher then the wages that he pays the workers combined with his other production costs. Therefore, the price of the goods sold always exceeds the ability of the working class to buy back these goods as determined by their wages. The results are periods of overproduction of goods which the workers and other purchasers throughout the world do not have enough money to buy back. Cutbacks in production become necessary to deplete stocks of unsold goods and avoid market gluts. Prices are cut to undersell other capitalists causing the rate of profit to decline. The decline in the resulting rate of profit intensifies competition between capitalists. Economic crises become unavoidable. Unemployment becomes unavoidable. The law of surplus value, which is Marx's term for the means by which the ruling class extracts from the labour of workers a profit when it sells its goods for an amount higher then the workers' wages and the cost of purchasing, maintaining and replacing fixed capital goods, creates an instability that reverberates through the international capitalist economic system itself, nowadays anachronistically identified with "the free market". Most of the post-war period witnessed Japan, Germany and the United States form regional economic alliances in global competition with each other. The United States, however, continues to maintain its pre-eminent dominance of world capitalism which it established through mass industrial production in the 1920s and 1930s and later through its role as world policeman for capitalism. While in fierce competition with the other economic epicentres, the U.S. ruling class has to temper its economic interests with policies that will not set off a synchronized world recession which would destroy its global markets bringing the chickens home to roost.

Capitalism engenders competition, a boom and bust cycle, massive debt and borrowing, an unrelenting search for markets, imperialist exploitation, a drive to obtain raw materials wherever they are scattered in the world at the cheapest price and cost, and intense competition that results in paper profits, stock market instability, wars and economic

crises. Such is the irrational heritage of capital that stocks go up when the economy slows down and unemployment increases--read the Business Section of the *Globe and Mail* any day of the week. Such a heritage, in Marx's view, results in the pauperization of the world's population, the alienation of human beings in all their relations which increasingly become mediated through cold, hard cash, the development of a reserve army of unemployed to keep wages low, the prolitarianization of the middle class as it is drawn inexorably into the vortex of mass production and the wage economy, the internationalization and interpenetration of capital, colonial oppression and the brutal use of the state in order to enforce unequal social relationships based on private property. Marx foresaw this system finally being overthrown democratically through the conscious action of the overwhelming majority of the population, a conclusion he came to from his analysis of the Paris Commune of 1871 organized by the workers to resist the surrounding Prussian armies when their own rulers capitulated. By the very nature of capital, such a revolution could only be international in character.

Middle Class Instability

Have Marx's predictions proved accurate? Is Marxism still relevant? I do not intend to answer this question in detail or in all respects. Marx's theory of pauperization of the masses, whether such pauperization is viewed in relative or absolute terms, appears to be an accurate forecast when one views the overall decline in the standard of living of humanity on a world scale taking into consideration the vast pockets of illness and poverty in the southern hemisphere where, for example, an average lifespan of 30 years can be found in many countries on the continent of Africa. According to the United Nations, the three richest individuals in the world have a net worth equal to the poorest 48 countries. Similarly, when one considers the vast number of people who are without jobs and the number of people who are underemployed and only partially employed, when one considers the seemingly unending legions of persons without any work at all--millions displaced by the new economy in Eastern Europe alone not to speak of the third world, it can hardly be said that Marx's prediction regarding the ongoing and continued maintenance of a reserve army of unemployed has not proven true. Marx predicted that the petit-bourgeoisie would become polarized and remain an unstable class. His belief that the middle classes would become prolitarianized can be seen to be accurate when one considers the monopolization that has taken place in virtually every sector of the economy with a few notable exceptions such as the restaurant industry. In the last 50 years, we have seen the disappearance or near disappearance of the local movie house, the independent gasoline station owner, the solo professional practitioner, etc. Fifty years ago, we used to say that it was easy to get into the middle class but difficult to stay in it. Nowadays, those who do try to run dollar stores or make a living through self-employment are usually persons who cannot find regular work. They end up working long hours for low returns and suffer fully the emiserization that Marx foresaw.

Monopoly capitalism has encroached into virtually every sphere of human economic activity so that a few hundred companies now dominate world food production, gasoline and oil production, transportation, agriculture, the media, the airline industry, the computer and communication sectors, the entertainment industry, insurance companies, etc. Studies of the increased concentration of capital show that only five hundred companies dominate and control the main sectors of the world's economy and control budgets greater then that of many nation-states combined. The masters of these often U.S.-based mega-conglomerates decide what we wear, think, eat and even what we should look like. Therefore, in assessing the validity of Marx's theory of political economy including his view that the forces of economic production are the chief motor power of all social development, that state power, in the ultimate sense, is an instrument to further the interests of an economically dominant class and that political action by the majority can never be allowed to block the interests of the bourgeoisie in a decisive way without the working class itself taking political power, Marx has been vindicated throughout.

As pointed out earlier, in determining the relevance of Marxism, its predictive ability has to be considered. It would therefore be instructive to consider some essential statements made by Marx about the working class and about capitalism in the context of the present conjuncture.

The Present Conjuncture

It is fundamental to Marxism that the working class does not have a country, that the working class is international, that the working class as a social and economic class may have differences in language and culture but that its essential broad and critical interests are common. The development of capitalism since Marx's death has created a more homogeneously unified working class then he could conceivably have predicted. The international character of the working class and its growing unity over the last century has manifested itself in many ways. There is a general awareness among workers throughout the world that they live in an interrelated world in which events which occur in one sector of the world economy and in one country can affect them instantaneously in others. An awareness that the fate of workers throughout the world can be determined by global U.S-based corporations has seeped into the consciousness of hundreds of millions of people. It is generally accepted as an established fact among the intelligencia everywhere, among the victims of the International Monetary Fund's and World Bank's policies in the third world and within the labour movement, except among a few notably isolated pockets of backwardness like some nationalistic unions in the United States, that free trade represents policies against the interests of the working class.

Defeat to Militarism

Concomitantly with this sense of internationalism, one notices the growing difficulty that the power elites have in instituting militaristic policies. In order to mobilize American public opinion against Hussein in Iraq a few years ago, the most sophisticated means of thought control were implemented. News was managed on a scale that could only be described as Orwellian. Even with endless resources designed to whip up war hysteria in the United States or in Europe more recently in support of the bombing of ex-Yugoslavia, the thoroughness and rapidity with which jingoism has evaporated, often while the military operations are still in progress, is historically unprecedented. It shows that the skepticism and mass pacifism of the working class and its cynicism about the veracity of statements from political leaders on the most fundamental social and political issues such as war and peace has deepened beyond imagination. Contrast, for example, the few months it took for large sectors of the working class in Central and Eastern Europe, including Germany, to turn against the bombing of ex-Yugoslavia with the years that it took for the grand-grandfathers and great-grandmothers of these people to turn against the First World War and the grandparents of the current population to turn against the Second World War. It took years and military defeat--now it occurs within months and without military defeat; in fact, even with military success! There was not a single war in Marx's time or in the fifty years after his death in which capitalism had to withdraw its troops because the internal population in the imperialist world opposed it--not in Africa, not in the Phillipines nor in China nor in Indonesia nor in South America. Contrast that fact with what happened to the U.S. invasion in Vietnam which saw an international anti-war movement develop in opposition to it during its currency; or with the outcry against the U.S. intervention in Somalia or Cuba and, eventually, in Iran; or with the Algerian war where French imperialism was defeated as much in the streets of Paris and in the pages of Sartre's *Cahiers du Cinema* as in the Battle of Algiers, or with the ignoble and hasty retreat from Afghanistan by the troops of the Soviet Union as that country was enveloped by a profound pacifist war-weariness.

War Policies Restricted

If truth has been the first casualty of war in the past, it can be said that war is the first casualty of truth in the present. No imperialist country can risk a lengthy land-based military intervention in any part of the world without considering first and foremost the probability of massive anti-war opposition within its homeland frequently buttressed and supported by an international anti-war campaign. In order to keep the world safe for capitalism without invoking international opposition including massive opposition to war in the very crucible of the country which is waging that war, the United States, Britain, Russia and France have had to abandon the kind of protracted interventions which saw French imperialism limp out of Algeria and the United States hobble out of Korea in favour of high-tech lightening-quick mechanized automated air bombardments or missile strikes as in Panama, the Malvinas, Grenada, ex-Yugoslavia, and, to a lesser extent, Chechnya and Afghanistan. The threat of an anti-war movement now truncates the scope of war. The shorter duration of such belligerent campaigns and the absence or only brief and limited involvement of land troops make these interventions highly ineffective in replacing the targeted political leaderships in these countries. This significant restriction on the military maneuverability of imperialism has resulted from a growing awareness which used to come in the long term, if at all, but now comes in the medium or short term, that wars are not in workers' interests. Wars may still be ideologically justified by the elites as being in the national interest or carried out for humanitarian purposes or with any of the other shibboleths used to drown the world in blood in order to keep it safe for capitalism. But workers have lost their zest to die on foreign soil to sanctify official lies.

Vietnam–A Turning Point

The movement against the war in Vietnam represented the most coordinated and sustained campaign of an international character carried out by the working class and its allies in the student and youth movements and among the petti bourgeoisie in history. It marked the beginning of the end of American triumphalism. It set the pace and tone for subsequent generations of political protest. It arose from and reinforced an internationalist consciousness that now permeates the entire population of earth. Every major anti-imperialist war now begets an anti-war movement in time. The Khomanis and Husseins, in their incarnation as media-amplified bogeymen, are no longer effective for very long in justifying wars that waste human life in large numbers. Of course, such growing internationalism has also shown itself in other ways; for example, in acts of unity and support for the dockworkers' strikes in Liverpool and Sydney which saw workers in port cities from San Francisco to Rotterdam refuse to accept delivery of goods emanating from these struck ports, and popular mobilizations involving hundreds of thousands of sympathizers; in movements in favour of alleviating exploitative and unsafe labour conditions in various parts of the world; in internationally coordinated campaigns opposing free trade; and in the tricontinental efforts of Zapatistas in southern Mexico to mobilize anti-imperialist consciousness in support of indigenous people throughout the world. The number one issue currently mobilizing young people on campuses throughout the United States exemplifies another expression of international solidarity--the label campaign designed to stop the superexploitation of women and children in third world countries from Haiti to Indonesia. By its very nature, such international consciousness and solidarity is uneven, remains undeveloped in some parts of the world and has left some backward workers behind. However, a considered assessment reveals overall that, since the clarion call of solidarity with the fight against fascism that gave birth to

the International Spanish Brigades in the 1930s in which Canadians played a proud role, there has been a qualitative leap in the awareness of the working class in coming to terms with its status as a supranational entity willing and able to mobilize in support of its sisters and brothers who are exploited, abused and decimated by capitalism in every corner of the globe.

Anti-War Movement Grows

The ever accelerating pace of inter-penetration of capital has made a mockery of bourgeois concepts of national borders, sovereignty and independence. At the turn of the century, just think of the borders in Europe splattered with the blood of millions of soldiers who died in defence of a few hundred yards, as in Vimy Ridge. Borders guarded by armed military troops and barking attack dogs are now criss-crossed by highways across which people speed from one country to another without even being stopped. At the same time, the walls around Pax Europa keeping out third world refugees grow ever higher. The historic rivalry between Germany and France that defined European history for a century has been cast aside in the rush to remove the final obstacles to the free movement of capital. All this is not to say that national rivalries have totally disappeared, that national capitalisms do not compete fiercely, that there are no backward workers who think in chauvinistic terms or that the horrors of national oppression have disappeared. One only has to look at the treatment of the Kurds, the Chechens, the Armenians and the Palestinians to see how far that that is far from being the case. Consider also the ongoing rivalries within the European Community between the north and south and east and west. The general tendency, however, has been for the working class to exhibit a qualitatively deeper international consciousness then could possibly have been foreseen in recent years.

What will be the next step in the development of such international consciousness? Will it increase rapidly? Will we see a growing move toward the integration of Canada, Mexico and the United States into a "free trade zone" (undoubtedly skewed in favour of U.S. capital) which will create political and organic links between the working class that are not now imaginable? Will the socialist awareness that will come with future experience among the young spread as rapidly as its present anarchistic mood has spread, defining the political contours of virtually every youth culture in every country in the world, becoming a universal phenomenon? Will modern technology, including the internet and other forms of electronic communication, make it qualitatively easier for socialists to share experiences, ideas and solutions even as the electronic highways become clogged with the traffic of the marketplace? To one extent or another, revolutionists, as optimists, answer yes to all of these questions. Look, for example, at a clipping that I brought back from Australia–where the rank and file membership is fighting the Labour Party right-wing leadership in New South Wales for the right to democratically choose their own electoral candidates. Thousands of miles away, yet the same struggle with similar features–a universalization of class experience.

Workers more United

Marx also predicted that the working class would become more unified, that divisions based on age, on sex and on colour will eventually evaporate in the cauldron of capitalist exploitation and mass production, that the socialization of production will result in the working class gaining increased weight numerically and socially. We have seen, especially in the last century, this prediction become true. The mass migration of millions of blacks from the plantations of the U.S. South to the factories of the North in the 1930s integrated them into the working class and into urban populations in a way that could not have been foreseen. The subsequent integration of 37 million Latinos into the U.S. population, of millions of Africans and other peoples from the colonial world into Europe, and similar cultural admixtures throughout many of the other countries of the world, with the notable exceptions of Japan and China, has created a diverse multicultural working class in which workers with different backgrounds, experiences and appearances learn to talk, respect, live with and love each other. Although still living in balkanized ghettoes, Latinos and Blacks have also established a visibility to the white work force not previously there. Xenophobia has suffered a major setback, although it is far from dead. No longer can the bourgeoisie permit talk about the "yellow peril", about the "Japs", about the "Chinks"; they have even had to pass laws that forbid such racist epitaphs now seldom heard; they have had to pay lip service to recognizing equality of all peoples while at the same time, continuing to divide and rule them. Capitalism has made discrimination subtle, impersonal, indirect, institutional and hidden, increasingly conflating it with class discrimination.

Women enter Washington

Undoubtedly, the most dramatic and significant example of the working class becoming unified emerged in the First World War and was reinforced in the Second World War when women were integrated by the millions into the international war effort and, in particular, the munitions industry. From that time onwards, and not always evenly but with growing acceleration since the 1960s, women have become integrated into the paid labour force to the point where they are now approaching equal status in their numbers with men. Marx predicted the prolitarianization of the masses as capitalism extended itself further and further into all spheres of human activity. Ripped away from the mind-numbing, isolating dead-end unpaid home labour of cleaning floors, doing laundry, washing dishes and being relegated to becoming baby machines, women now flood into community colleges, universities, the factories, trade unions, offices, the professions, the political parties, the bureaucracies,

into civil society as a whole in a way that was previously unpredictable. Women have given the class struggle a sharp edge of militancy, compassion and a sense of solidarity which males on their own are not able to attain. The massive prolitarianization of women has had a profound leavening impact on the consciousness of the class. Most of us who were active in the 40s, 50s and 60s assumed as a matter of rote that women were politically backward because of their social atomization. Historically, women always lagged behind men in voting for labour parties in England, in Canada, in Brazil, in Australia, in Italy, in France and in virtually every other country in which there were labour party formations or radical parties. Women were more conservative, more politically undeveloped and more lacking in understanding the need for independent working class action. Now, the situation has not only changed but the dialectic of history has in fact reversed it. Virtually every single study made in England, in Canada, in Australia, in New Zealand and everywhere where there are labour parties shows that women consistently vote for labour parties in numbers that are close to or exceed males and far exceed their own historical levels of support.

Womens' Movement Critical

The womens movement has played a key role in most of the important historic events that have occurred in Canada in the past few generations. It was women's Native councils that led the Oka uprising 10 years ago, the most militant Native struggle that has taken place in decades, the women's council of elders who mobilized the nation and directed the Mohawk warriors to stand firm. It was the women's movement that played a critical role in defeating the Meech Lake referendum. Both of these events have been much in the news the last few weeks because we are celebrating their anniversaries. They reflect the dramatic impact of women on political events in modern times, something that was foreseeable to Karl Marx and Frederich Engels, who predicted that the ultimate course for the equal treatment of women would come from their integration into the working class and into the paid labour force. Of all the movements that have emerged or re-emerged in the last 50 years, the women's movement has caused the most profound paradigm shift, has brought into deeper question traditional roles and perceptions about the family, about what it means to be a man and what it means to be a women, about personal and gender mores; the women's movement has outshined all the rest. The women's movement has caused all of society to re-examine and reassess whether patterns of gender identity inculcated by capitalism are inherent or socially defined. It is this movement that has set the example for other movements such as the gay and lesbian movements for equal rights. The process of integrating more then half of the world's population into the paid working class is a profoundly significant process taking place in the economic infrastructure of society that is bound to have and already has had a significant impact on the consciousness of the class as a whole. Its development is entirely consonant with Marx's prediction of the ongoing prolitarianization of the masses.

Industrial Unionism

Marx anticipated the eventual unity of all oppressed classes. He saw the working class as the decisive force for social change and sought to give it a sense of its own awareness of its common interests. During the time that Marx lived and in the 50 years after his death, people were deeply divided not only by sex and race but also by trade. We all know the significance that revolutionary socialists attach to the development of industrial unionism and its replacement of craft unionism. In the United States, the rise of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (C.I.O.) was characterized as a semi-revolution by Leon Trotsky, then in exile in Mexico. The rise of industrial unionism through the C.I.O. in the United States and parallel developments in the rest of the advanced capitalist countries during the Great Depression added a dynamic of unity to struggles of the working class that overcame its previous divisions into squabbling craft unions fighting each other for greater jurisdiction. We saw a similar development in Canada, in the U.S., in England, in New Zealand, in Australia, even in Hawaii. In the U.S., in some factories such as tobacco plants in the 1920s, there might have been five or ten different unions. Workers who swept the floor, workers who worked at machines, workers who cleaned the machines, workers who fixed the machines, workers who produced products, workers who packed products for shipment and workers who delivered products were typically in different unions even though they may have all worked in one plant or industry. This was the case in the first 35 or 40 years of this century in many countries. Industrial unionism unified them by bringing most workers in the same plant and later, in the same industry, into one union whatever their job might be. This resulted in a profound leap of consciousness, a sense of unity and cohesion and class solidarity that the working class had not previously evinced. Workers could no longer be so easily played off against each other on the basis of their skills.

Unions Consolidate

What has happened to the organizational unity of the working class since that time? Even with the trade union movement suffering a decline at present, a more significant decline in the United States and barely holding on to its numbers in Canada, we have still seen trade unions develop in a more unified way then was expected. The number of trade unions existing in separate organizational form has declined everywhere in the advanced capitalist countries. The size of the remaining unions has experienced a parallel increase. More workers are unified and organized in fewer larger unions then ever before. These union members are performing a wide variety of tasks that often have only a historic or even no relation whatever to the initial organizing base of such unions. Who could possibly imagine that a trade union that had been built to represent

the interests of auto workers would end up representing the interests of workers who fish for a living on the East and West coasts or who work in fast food restaurants in Quebec or as porters in hotels in Vancouver or clean bedpans in hospitals? Even the red unions of Poland in the 1930s that were schools for communism did not organize across different industries. Such organic organizational unity between workers in different sectors of the economy place unions in strategic positions. Members of the working class who are geographically and sectorally diverse and dispersed can offer solidarity and support to others when they are under attack by capital. These reconfigured unions have reinforced the identity of having a common interest among workers in a wide variety of economic spheres and enhanced their awareness of themselves and their solidarity as a class irrespective of the particular work that they do or the place that they do it. In some cases, users of facilities have formed close links with service providers that are unionized like the Bus Riders Union in Los Angeles thereby creating links between workers as workers and workers as consumers. The contradictary growth of consciousness is such that even black police officers are organizing to combat racial stereotyping in the courts and within police forces.

Of course, this is not to say that integration of minorities and the integration of women and the integration of poor workers or unskilled workers in outlying areas into unions has somehow created a form of complete equality among them. Women are still overexploited and underpaid compared to men; visible minorities are still subject to discrimination, poor jobs and poor salaries; workers are still poisoned by racism; women are still facing a glass ceiling; unskilled workers are still frowned down on by skilled workers– this is so and the tendency for this to be so will always exist under capitalism despite the fact that equality is a historic task associated with nascent capitalism. Still, the dynamic has been for oppressed sectors of the working class to develop links, connections and contacts that they have never had before in fighting such oppression. History has placed workers in situations in which they are more and more drawn into the vortex of class militancy, class consciousness and class unity. The hegemony of capitalism's divide-and-rule tactics is being cracked as never before.

How Consciousness Develops

Marx argued that political consciousness was socially determined, that sooner or later workers would begin to understand and appreciate their collective interests as a class not only in the economic sphere but also in the political sphere. Has this prediction been born out? Some may say not too well. This is especially so when one realizes that at no previous point of time in recent history have the revolutionary tendencies been weaker, more isolated and smaller. Seldom has the revolutionary left been more disunited. Yet, at no time have the ideas of Marxism been so accessible; at no time has the mood of anti-authoritarianism been so profound; at no time has there been such a lack of confidence in capitalism; at no time has there been such a rejection of the status quo; at no time has there been such an awareness of the ways in which big business tries to control, shape and determine political, social and cultural thought; at no time have the icons of capitalism been so transparent to so many young people, to so many artists, to so many writers, to so many students and to so many workers throughout the world. In the language of post-modernism, the dominant discourse involves the delegitimization of the iconography of capitalism. For someone who remembers the conservatism of the 1950s, it still amazes that a department of political economy in a major university in a major city should be so dominated by and influenced by Marxist thought over the decades that those who do not adhere to a socially critical perspective are the ones who feel out of synch. The hegemony of capitalism has weakened to such a point that bourgeois critics of laissez-faire free trade policies such as Stavros are being celebrated instead of denounced as traitors in that venerable rag of the rich, *The Wall Street Journal*.

Mass Movements Now

For those of us who grew up politically in the 1960s, we well remember the critical tactical lesson successfully applied at that time: that the broad unity of the working class can only be built through united fronts, that single issue movements are critical to the development of such fronts in order to enable them to achieve the broadest possible unity around the simplest and clearest demands. It was with this perspective that we led and built the movement for unilateral nuclear disarmament, for women to have a choice and to control their bodies, the movement to end the war in Vietnam by calling for the withdrawal of U.S. troops and ending Canada's complicity and the movement for student/faculty/support staff control of universities. Each of these movements had its own separate identity, organizational form, leadership, base of support and focus for action. The organizational base of support for these movements was typically among intermediate social layers, students, young people who were preprolitarian and the intelligencia, with organized workers generally absent or under-represented. Although there was much talk about a worker/student alliance in the 1960s and 1970s, it really did not exist except as a hope. It was only in Quebec that the working class had mass sympathy for the student movement that developed in the 1960s. Imagine that an activist at that time had fallen asleep and woke up in the year 2000 and looked at the social composition and demands of the growing mass movements at present. That person would have difficulty understanding what has happened. Of course, there still are mass movements and expressions of social discontent focused on certain demands. Of course, the united front tactic retains its essential validity. But the existing movements tend to encompass a *series* of demands with a common focus. I am

speaking of the hundreds of thousands of people who mobilized a few months ago in Washington in support of equal rights for gays and lesbians. I am speaking of the million man march which mobilized a million black men and, incidentally, a lot of black women as well, in Washington a few years ago around demands which had a clear anti-capitalist dynamic, no matter how reactionary some of the top organizers of that event were; I am speaking however more probatively of the demonstrations in Seattle and Washington which took place recently.

Workers Back Youth

Although the protest in Seattle and Washington may not be considered as numerically significant as the anti-Vietnam war movement protest which mobilized one and a half million marchers in 1969 in one demonstration in Washington to protest the war in Vietnam, Seattle may well be a harbinger of what is to come. In many respects, Seattle represents something that is novel, something that Marx predicted could develop when he said that political consciousness is socially determined. First, to an unforeseen extent, the working class was there along with students and youth. This was something new. It is true that there were always a few dozen trade unionists at every anti-war demonstration of any significance in the 1960s. It was always possible to get the president of a labour council to endorse and to call for equal employment rights for a gay fired from his job. The labour movement would always make donations to an organization for women's rights in the past. But to have twenty thousand trade unionists join thirty thousand youth, as was the case in Seattle, in a common and coordinated protest aimed at the moguls of the world's oligopolies, has been and is without precedent in North America. Although the numbers themselves are not significant in absolute terms, it certainly shows what might be possible and what might develop in the future. It shows the potential for a real worker/student alliance like the one that we aimed for in the 1960s and 1970s but were not able to attain because of the passivity of the workingclass at that time. It shows the possibility for coordinated action between the working class and its allies; it shows potential for unity in action among those who are oppressed and exploited, the kind of unity that is a sine qua non, a condition precedent to any meaningful and permanent social change. Although it is far from clear when the experience will be repeated, how long it will take to be repeated and whether such unity, which we also saw in the protests in Washington and in Windsor, will necessarily crescendo in the near future, it is in the air; it is beginning to move into the streets. And it has found its echo in similar demonstrations as far away as Japan, Melbourne and Thailand. An alliance between students, youth and workers, organized and unorganized, can conquer this world. On the eve of the new millenium, these events, hopefully, will be a portent for the future.

This is only one significant aspect of Seattle. The other significant aspect of Seattle can be found in the political nature of the demonstration. Both mobilizations in Washington and Seattle were directed against international institutions of imperialism designed to enforce so-called restructuring in the third world, and opposition to free trade and the World Trade Organization. These goals unified all the participants in these mobilizations as they did also in Windsor in early June, 2000. However, the constituent elements of the participating organizations had their own demands. These demands centered on environmental issues, on world debt issues, on issues involving conditions of superexploitation of labour in the third world and on a plethora of other concerns including genetically modified foods, the death penalty, corporatism, etc. Permeating all of these subsidiary issues and providing a focus for the demonstration was a sense that there was one underlying cause for the ills which the demonstrators targeted: the social system of capitalism. There was a general awareness that fewer and fewer monopoly corporations are having more and more say about the fundamental social and political questions facing humanity and that such corporations exercise powers which governments are either bowing down to or are limited in their ability to influence and contain. There is a growing awareness among the anti-authoritarian young that the problems that they face are rooted in a social system with a definied economic form, with a defined class structure and with a defined hierarchy of command. The marches in Seattle, Washington and Windsor were permeated with a sense that corporate power; that is, capitalism, was the immediate, proximate and ultimate enemy.

Anti-Capitalist Dynamic

Such a broad general mobilization against *capitalism* is historically unprecedented. A growing number of people are making connections. I witnessed a similar phenomenon in New York City a few months ago when six thousand people mobilized in defence of Abu Jamal Mumiya now on death row after being railroaded by a kangaroo court on a phony murder charge. Time after time, black people, white people, environmentalists, gays, lesbians and representatives of the labour movement criticized the class-oriented judicial system that was prosecuting an innocent black activist. Notwithstanding the clear simple focus of this rally at the Madison Square Gardens Theatre, speaker after speaker also identified the enemy as something very general--*capitalism*. The connection between the two was so implicit in the thoughts of the audience that it did not even have to be explained. The sense that specific ills result from a social system represents a significant escalation in political consciousness in my own lifetime. It reflects an escalation of *general* political consciousness that was unheard of in the 1960s. Back then, a small group always identified capitalism as the enemy but the majority of activists did not. Those of us who were involved in the mass movements of that time and in particular the movement against the war in Vietnam remember how we always tried to make the connection in discussions with other

activists that the war in Vietnam was not a mistake but was part of a deliberate pattern of imperialist policies pursued by the United States. Our goal at that time was to show a specific war as a product of a foreign policy serving the interests of capitalists. We considered it very significant if we were able to convince anti-war activists of this fact. Yet today, by and large, activists in the environmental movement, in the abolish-the-third-world-debt movement which is so strong in many parts of Europe, in the movement to eliminate capital punishment, in the student movement, in the women's movement, in the movement against poverty, in the solidarity movements tend to take for granted that capitalism is the source of the problems which they face. This understanding is imperfect, incomplete and not always thorough, *but it is there.* As a generalized consciousness, this awareness, which is often as subliminal as it is explicit, which is as often assumed as it is stated, represents what Marxists have historically categorized as a rise in the political consciousness of the masses. It signifies a potentially profound anti-capitalist dynamic.

March Separately, Strike Together

There was a portentous development that occurred in Windsor and Seattle. A large number of young people decided that they would engage in civil disobedience at both of these protests. By and large, the trade unions participating in an organized, disciplined fashion in these demonstrations decided not to get involved in such civil disobedience activities. They marched separately under their own banners although in unity with the students and youth who were engaged in more confrontational manifestations of protest. Interestingly however, in neither instance did the workers separate themselves or disassociate themselves from the more militant actions. March separately, strike together was the approach. In Windsor, it became apparent that the police would prevent the demonstration from blocking the annual assembly of the Organization of American States that was the target of the demonstration. Police officers by the thousands were standing by across the border in Detroit if needed in a quaint gesture of help to their Canadian ruling class brethren--you see, the bourgeoisie also know the importance of international solidarity. The workers decided to invite the youth to their own rally the evening before and join them in their own planning meetings. The trade unionists, largely members of the Canadian Auto Workers (C.A.W.) who participated by the hundreds in the demonstration, decided that they would march beside the students and youth and act as a protective buffer as well as witnesses for them in any confrontations. This is exactly what they did. When the youth were arrested, the unionists were there making notes and taking pictures. They subsequently ensured that any students and youth that were hurt received urgent medical attention. They followed behind the police paddy wagons which took the students to jail, arranged for those who needed legal help to be released on bail and made sure they were released from jail. Later that night, as young anarchists with purple spiked hair emerged from police holding cells, C.A.W. unionists offered them hot coffee, comradeship, support and transportation home.

A thousand books could not teach the students what they learned in that one day. They learned about their own weakness in the face of the state and they learned that strength comes from solidarity. These acts of solidarity reflected the beginning of a significant interplay initiated by the organizations of the working class acting in a disciplined fashion and mobilizing in defence of others who sought to make a symbolic statement through civil disobedience. It showed the potential for unity between workers and youth. It showed the working class coming to the rescue of those who were more isolated and subject to repression. While it is easy to overstate the significance of this support provided by organizations of the working class to anarchist battalions seeking a symbolic confrontation with the state, it nevertheless represents a tendency which, under propitious circumstances, could be repeated on a larger scale and in different and more consequential contexts.

Populist Consciousness

Marx predicted that as long as bourgeois ideology held sway, workers would not overthrow capitalism. Repression was in the mind–as much as in the factory. The working class in the advanced capitalist states on the threshold of the new millenium does not have a socialist consciousness but is nonetheless imbued with a profound populist mood. Youth and students universally express opposition to authority and are deeply influenced by a growing awareness of the lack of validity to the icons and rationales of capitalism–for example, who now believes that, if you work hard, you will be able to become rich?

While deconstruction of capitalist ideology and symbols has become an ubiquitous phenomenon among the young, the working class itself is experiencing a more complex mood. The denouement of Stalinism in Russia and East Europe has cast an even darker shadow on the popularity of socialism in the sense that it is not now regarded as an alternative internationally to capitalism which it was even in its grotesque Stalinist form. Stalinism in Russia represented an historical meander–imperialism broke at its weakest link impelling the working class into power but isolating it in a hostile capitalist world. Although the economic base of socialism was established–social ownership; the political form of socialism, democratic social control, soon degenerated as a result of isolation and backwardness into a monopoly of state power by a privileged bureaucratic caste. This self-interested Stalinist caste mediated between the Soviet Union's national economic base and the world capitalist system. History swept aside this social anomaly which collapsed under the weight of its economic contradictions while permitting the advanced capitalist

countries to extend their longevity economically by raising the standard of living of its own peoples through the superexploitation of the countries of the southern hemisphere. Simultaneously, capitalism reinforced its hold by impugning the ideological attraction of socialism through a decades-long campaign in which the Stalinist social deviation, which arose uniquely as a result of the uneven and combined development of capitalism, was pictured as the inevitable outcome of all efforts to achieve socialism. Capitalism's longevity was also aided by the Stalinist policies of peaceful co-existence and socialism in one country which undermined revolutionary struggles throughout the world by subverting them in the diplomatic interests of the Soviet Union. The discredit brought to socialism has recently been reinforced by the capitulation to neo-liberalism of the labour party leaderships in England, Italy, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Western Europe and several other countries where labour parties were elected to resist the decline of workers' living standards and cutbacks in social services but instead ended up becoming enthusiastic implementers of such policies.

Capitalism Loses Appeal

Although socialism is not now seen as the immediate solution to the problems of capitalism by reason of the historic capitulation of Stalinism, and social democracy, the fact remains that the working class is also not particularly enamoured with capitalism. In numerous countries including Canada and the United States, participation in elections is at a historically low point. Less than 50% of American citizens voted in the 1996 presidential elections. Canada's voter turnout was the lowest in 100 years during the 1997 federal election. Voting patterns established over decades have eroded. Third parties tinged in populist hues abound. There is a deep cynicism about the "political class" arising from the sense that workers understand that ultimately they do not control their own destiny either nationally or individually. In Canada, we have seen a disintegration of the traditional tweedledum and tweedledee game played by the Liberals and now tattered Conservatives, a growth in regionalism and localism and a rejection of the schemes of the political elite. This discontent burst out dramatically when the Meech Lake Accord was rejected in a cross-country referendum. Such anti-elitism, of course, reflects a low level of political consciousness. At the same time, it does provide a terrain which can sustain a radical consciousness.

Capitalists, of course, are not standing idly by without defending their vaunted values. Never has there been a greater emphasis on materialism, on consumerism, on largely escapist and vicarious activities, designed to divert people from the lack of meaning and satisfaction which they find in their work and in their lives, from a profound state of anomie that numbs all classes, from grinding impoverishment which has seen the employed and unemployed poor being crushed by capitalism. Workers are jailed in unprecedented numbers (two million at last count in the United States,) subjected as seldom before to job stress, speedups, harassment, fatigue, the insecurity of part-time and contract work, and life in a social system without a vision or ideal, which engenders insecurity, passivity, addiction, emotional illness and depression. Ten percent of the workforce in Canada suffer from clinical depression. The nuclear family has been stripped to its alienated essence with both parents now having to work to make ends meet and the mother much less frequently staying home then was the case two or three generations ago. In the last 40 years in the U.S., the divorce rate has doubled, the teen suicide rate has tripled and the juvenile violence rate has quadrupled.

The difficulty that the bourgeoisie is experiencing in defending its ideology, which is increasingly seen as leading to corruption, deceit and excess, is a new development. Transformation of society on the scale envisioned by Marx is inconceivable without workers first losing their belief that the capitalist system can meet their needs. The essential subjective contradiction for Marxists lies in the fact that, while millions of people recognize that capitalism cannot meet their needs, they do not see an alternative. As a result, the class exhibits a populist consciousness that can flow to the right if it is not organically linked to the left, or dissipate to a hopeless and frustrating cynicism that manifests itself in depoliticization, withdrawal and self-preoccupation. Such a panorama is inevitable in the absence of a solution that people can turn to to solve their immediate problems, whether or not they understand their problems to be social in origin.

Workers' Leaders Adapt

What is the leadership of the working class doing to deal with the current crisis of capitalism? Where does the revolutionary left place itself on this landscape? The great divide between what the working class needs and what its leaders deliver forms the fundamental political problem of our era. The class itself is resilient and capable of combative action. It retains an optimism and a high level of expectations which comes from not having experienced an extended depression of a profound character for several generations. It retains the integrity of its economic organizations which have been stymied in absolute terms by unemployment and so-called economic restructuring but which have not been decimated. It even has a heightened sense of solidarity and class consciousness which has been reinforced by many factors. These include an increased concentration of capital which has resulted in the conglomeration of workers in specific enterprises and the agglomeration of workers from different economic spheres into common organizations, from the feminization of the working class and from the growing level of literacy, culture, education and training that has been a concomitant development of the new knowledge-based, computer-oriented economic spheres that have replaced manufacturing in the core of so many cities. One example will suffice–800

Natives in Canada in 1969 had post-secondary degrees; now 150,000 do. The class exhibits a self-confidence and sophistication that comes from unprecedented levels of urbanization and cultural interaction.

The big void, vacuum, absence has been at the level of political leadership. While capable of mobilizing thousands, even hundreds of thousands when needed, as with the labour Days of Protest in Ontario, for example, a few years ago, the leadership of the trade union movement, which we continue to characterize as a privileged bureaucratic caste aware of its interests as distinct from that of the workers, exhibits a profound braking effect on the political development of the class. Street mobilizations and strikes, carried out in piecemeal fashion without any overall strategy, have their inherent limitations since they do not challenge the power of the bourgeoisie to control the state apparatus and do not compete with the capitalist political parties for political hegemony.

Now that neo-capitalism can make only few and limited concessions in the increasingly competitive and unstable economic climate, even militant mobilizations by labour do little to prevent the economic erosion that capitalism has inflicted on the standard of living of workers. The old ways are not working for the union bureaucrats yet they have failed to move militantly into the political sphere in order to achieve there what they can no longer win on the picket line. Even when they could have mobilized the population in a successful confrontation with the government, as the teachers unions were able to do in Ontario three years ago, the leadership wavered and divided while the labour movement as a whole retreated from unified support.

In most advanced capitalist countries, with some notable exceptions such as Norway and France, workers turn to supporting labour electorally in significant numbers but with a growing sense of ennui and listlessness. They do so in fewer numbers then in the past, many choosing not to vote at all. This is because the labour parties in power in 14 out of 16 European common market countries no longer can serve the traditional role of achieving reforms for workers at a time when the intensification of competition among capitalist trade blocs and increased rates of exploitation result in such parties no longer being able to wrest concessions as mediators between the classes. They have, in many countries, been turned into instruments of neo-liberal policies instituted in a "caring" way under the rubric of the "Third Way". where they have been in power. But there really is no "Third Way". There is only the Marxist way, or the highway.

In some instances, sections of the labour leadership have talked the talk but not walked the walk. CAW leader Buzz Hargrove has correctly and repeatedly criticized the NDP leadership for losing its distinct identity as a result of its drift to the right including support for tax cuts. But the CAW has not used its considerable resources and rights as an NDP-affiliated union to challenge the leadership within the Party where it counts. Its decision to avoid organizing the left within the Party—indeed, its refusal to work with the left in the past *and present*, has allowed the NDP leadership to steer the party to near-oblivion.

Revolutionary Groups Weak

Since the needs of the working class for an alternative to capitalism have never been greater, it is ironic in this situation that the revolutionary socialist organizations have never been weaker. Where the labour parties are strong and active and the labour movement united and pro-active, so also is the revolutionary left. The labour movement itself in many countries has been divided and split to one extent or another by economic sector (public or private) colour, sex and age under the intensified pressure of capitalist exploitation. The revolutionary socialist groups are themselves divided, organizationally weak or tired, unable to intervene in the mass movements in any meaningful way and play at most an educational role where such possibilities exist. The puffery, self-aggrandizement and illusions of grandeur exhibited by some of the groups are symptoms of a political psychosis bred by isolation from mass political organizations. Since the decline of the anti-Vietnam war movement and the movement for freedom of choice in the 1970s following its victories, the revolutionary left has not had any broad, activist milieus in which to intervene in a consistent manner involving successful mass mobilizations over sustained periods of time. Thus the decline of the revolutionary left could hardly have been avoided since the revolutionary left does not exist in a vacuum. Its ups and downs reflect the ebb and flow of the class struggle itself.

In such contradictory times, a significant element of the socialist left has become frustrated by its isolation and lack of success, abandoning the critical role of advancing a transitional program of revolutionary reforms rooted in the experience of the masses and being able to mobilize broad support. As a result, some socialists have variously succumbed to action-freaking, to sectarianism, to ultraleftism, to self-aggrandizement, to substituting their own meager forces for the mass movements. The women's movement becomes consumed by purity and dogma alienating needed allies in the petti bourgeoisie, fetishizing minority women and forgetting the traditions of campaigns on single issues and of all-inclusiveness which gave the movement its vitality and breadth in the first place. Militant actions of a symbolic nature have been given a significance they do not have in real life. For the ultraleft, political possibilities become probabilities become inevitabilities. Agitation replaces education. The egg becomes the chicken, the beginning of a struggle becomes the end. Anarchists seek to spark revolt through isolated acts of heroic confrontation that reduce the working-class to the role of spectator. Coalitions necessary to build broad-based support for successful single issue movements are frequently

missing. The Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (O.C.A.P.), in a fit of spontaneism, storms the barricades and becomes consumed with its own legal defence when its leadership should be politicizing and educating large numbers of people.

Revolutionary Left Capitulates

On the other hand, other radicals capitulate or retreat from the struggle. An important part of the left supported the bombing of ex-Yugoslavia. Campaigns for equal rights for gays and lesbians are trivialized by commercialized parades. Environmentalists wait, too often passively, for the big disaster to apocalyptically awaken popular consciousness. Persons with radical backgrounds and long histories of activism become integrated into working as functionaries for the trade unions where they play little or no political role on a daily basis or abandon their revolutionary politics. Activists and socialists by the thousands withdraw their memberships from the N.D.P. because they see no perspective in fighting the leadership on questions of principle. Otherwise militant trade union leaders toy with lesser evil bourgeois politics and strategic alliances instead of fighting the reformist NDP leadership and assuming responsibility for advancing the Party as the voice of labour. Marxist academics without an activist base in the class or in the social movements attempt to disseminate their views through a weekly paper under the illusion that money and fame can substitute for daily involvement in the class struggle. They myopically believe that mass education can take place, without organization and roots, through journals or newspapers which do not arise out of the organic struggles of the class itself but are artificially inserted from outside of it. The leadership of the radical black community accepts uncritically as co-speakers on its platforms and at its meetings individuals and organizations which espouse anti-female and anti-gay views from the Nation of Islam. Revolutionists succumb to utopian schemes and develop illusions that capitalism can be undermined by microprojects such as green cooperative economic projects which are somehow going to be independent of or replace the encroaching capitalist economy…

Amidst all this, there are few arenas, more accurately, none at all, where activists from various sectors of the social and protest movements can come together to exchange experiences and talk, a role the NDP could play under the right conditions. In this situation, many retreat from a mass class struggle perspective focused on labour party politics into second millenium versions of putchism, utopianism, mechanism, ultraleftism, spontaneism, schematism and adaptationism.

Still, the crisis of leadership, the existing gap between what is needed and what is available for the working class in terms of its leadership can not form the basis for discounting either the accuracy or relevance of Marxism. Marxism is neither a mechanistic schema nor a blueprint which excludes subjective consciousness as a critical intervening factor. History provides the stage; humans must choose to play the role or else there will be no show. Marxism is a method of analysis and not a set of lifeless tenets. Unevenness, inconsistencies and contradictions in the development of class consciousness are not only inevitable but are the *predominant norm*. Consider an example from today's headlines. The natives of the Burnt Church Reservation in New Brunswick have asserted their sovereignty over their right to fish for lobster in their territorial waters with armed patrols blocking entry to their land. A hunting and fishing people with a communal tradition asserting with explosive militancy historic collective rights against a capitalist state representing monopoly capital. And the state, despite its overwhelming power of military repression, stands helpless, at least for a microsecond of history, because of the political price violent repression would cost within its electoral base in the workingclass. What a complex masala of contradictions history presents us with!

The living process of developing revolutionary political consciousness cannot be reduced to a formula. If the workingclass was evenly politically conscious and remembered all the lessons of history, there would be no need for a revolutionary party to be its memory. Marx pointed out that the dominant ideas of an era are those of the ruling class. It is therefore inescapable and inevitable that workers will have illusions, that they will have false consciousness, that before they come to revolutionary conclusions, they will attempt to exhaust easier alternatives, reformist solutions to their problems. Revolutionary consciousness is something that comes at the end of the process, not at the beginning. Political consciousness follows the course of least resistance. It is also something that can be profoundly accelerated by a crisis in the system, an event which shocks people into realizing that the system is not coming across with the goods.

How Consciousness Develops

Marx pointed out that capitalism will never be replaced by socialism passively. The capitalist system will break down of its own accord but it will not be mechanically replaced. It is only through the conscious subjective intervention of the working class and its allies that we will be able to overturn the social system.

Marx also pointed out that daily life engenders repetition, custom, conservatism, the same way of doing things all the time. It is only when an objective debilitation occurs that revolutionary initiatives in action can result in fundamental change in the balance of forces sufficient enough to enable a conscious leadership to take political power through a popular democratic uprising. Consciousness does not develop in a straight line nor in a predictable fashion. Revolutionists do not sit around dreamily speculating when the revolution will come or when capitalism will experience a sharp and unexpected drop in the standard of living of the working class sufficient to create a politicizing shock. In our

lifetime or not is not important. That it will come is enough. We are aware that the general tendencies are there. It takes time for workers to digest the vast variety of experiences and influences to which they are subjected as a social entity. Consciousness develops chaotically, cumulatively and asymmetrically. Workers who are not very interested in politics will soon find that politics can be very interested in them. The political flood of the future will immerse everyone.

Many of the changes that are taking place in the political thinking of the working class are too far below the surface to be able to detect with ease. Consciousness can develop either slowly or suddenly depending upon the cumulative experiences of the constituent substrata of the working class and the subsequent interaction between them. The ruling class knows this well and for this reason maintains a thought-control political police force. In Russia, for example, in 1917 we saw a multiplicity of experiences ("overdetermination" was the term used by Althusser) give rise to a qualitative leap in political consciousness when war and hunger impelled the workers to join the peasantry in a revolutionary outburst which expropriated both the bourgeoisie and the landed aristocracy and gave workers the reins of state power. So unexpected was this development, which compressed centuries of history into months, that Lenin, the greatest Marxist practitioner of the last century, was compelled to utter his famous dictum that the workingclass stood in advance of the vanguard party.

New Possibilities

While we cannot predict with certainty any particular development that might take place at this present conjunctural point (and such an effort would be idle speculation in any event), we do know that the changes in the consciousness and structural organization of the workingclass have created new possibilities. It is the way different levels of understanding mix with each other; the way that different sectors of the working class osmotically exchange insights and experiences; it is intangible factors that shape political awareness before, during and after experiences are digested and shared, that form the matrix for big leaps in political consciousness. Socialist political consciousness arises as a result of an interconnectedness which emerges imperceptibly rather then through mechanical, unilinear development. Even when capital goes on the offensive, eddies and cross-currents of political consciousness are visible. Take a look for example at today's business section of the *Toronto Star*. You will see a picture of victims of AIDS, a disease born of poverty which is ravaging Africa and other impoverished parts of the world, having a political impact by fueling the movement to forgive the third world debt. For at least a sector of the African population, the experience of disease and illness, which normally has a depoliticizing affect, is making people aware that it is the superexploitation of the third world and the so-called restructuring of third world economies that is undermining their health sectors and is denying victims of AIDS the medical facilities and drugs needed to combat or control it. Or consider the fact that 79% of all malnourished children under 5 in the third world live in countries with food surpluses. Awareness of this fact alone strips the façade from the false allegation that international agricultural monopolies promote developmental progress by their investments.

It is not necessary to look at the third world to see such consciousness being created. A recent demonstration in Vancouver in support of freedom of choice in response to the attempted murder of a doctor providing abortions is instructive in this regard. A broad range of speakers spoke in favour of government action to stop the right-to-lifers from encroaching on the fundamental rights of women to control their bodies. There was a speaker there from the Progressive Conservative Party which has not exactly been in the vanguard of the struggle for women's rights. While the presence of this representative might not be considered very significant inasmuch as the demand of equal treatment to women is ultimately a historic task associated with capitalism, what was more interesting was the fact that there was a spokesperson there from the Hotel Employees' Union who, along with 2,600 other hotel workers, are currently on strike in Vancouver. This is a union that is composed primarily of women. Because of this fact, there is an awareness of the importance of defending freedom of choice among its membership. Fifty years ago, individual trade unions, or at the very least, individual locals seldom spoke out on an issue which is supposedly personal and controversial, such as freedom of choice. However, when women see themselves oppressed both as women and exploited as workers, their natural tendency is to have *all* their existing organizations speak out on their behalf on *all* issues. Thus, women as workers are leading the women's movement giving it a clear class character despite its bourgeois democratic programatic demands.

Struggles interconnected

Such an interconnectedness arising from multiple oppression signifies the accumulation of experience, the crescendoing of consciousness, the development of demands and the taking of actions that reflect a geometrical development of political awareness. Sooner or later, we know that consciousness catches up with reality. Political awareness originates at a subterranean level and the old blind mole, as Marx said, burrows up when least expected. In the summer of 1917, Lenin was hiding in a cave. A few months later, he was the leader of one of the most populous countries in the world. The longer the delay and the more the resistance to revolutionary consciousness and action shown by the class as it explores and rejects other less demanding alternatives, the more forcefully, suddenly and unexpectedly such consciousness will finally surge

forth. In Russia, on the day when the first revolution broke out in February, 1917, Lenin was in isolation from the Russian Bolshevik cadres in exile in Europe. Trotsky was in a refugee camp in Nova Scotia (of all places). The growth of the revolutionary leadership of the working class follows a jagged path which parallels the uneven experiences of the class as a whole and which can only be overcome by a transitional program that meets workers at their present level of understanding and impels them in anti-capitalist struggles which unify them and teach them the big lessons of history.

Capitalism Lacks Vision

To those who question the viability and relevance of Marxism and its chief practitioners in the last century, Lenin and Trotsky, and point to the lengthy period of capitalist prosperity as proof of the invalidity of Marxism, I respond by saying that Marxism is not a catastrophic theory any more then it is a conspiratorial theory. It is not a theory that imposes time limits. Marxist have a historical view: the struggle for liberation goes back to Spartacus through to Robespierre and into the future. The struggles of workers every day is part of a long link in the chain of a class struggle that will sooner or later resolve itself through socialism–the recreation of primitive communism on the basis of a developed technology, the negation of the negation, in philosophical terms. If, at the present time, it can be said that the birth and subsequent debacle of Stalinism has cast a shadow over the good name of socialism among many workers in the world, we tell the capitalists: show us your own battalions of loyalists. Show us the tens of thousands of young people who hail the capitalist system as the be-all and end-all. Show us your own inspiring vision for the future without the worms of corruption and the stock market manipulators. Show us how you have solved the fundamental problems of poverty, hunger and disease. Show us how you promote equality and whether you do so without meanders and retreats let alone cataclysmic revanchism. Show us how our long period of prosperity is not built on the backs of the millions that you superexploit in the third world. Show us how assiduously you obey your own laws. Show us how firm and fixed your ideology is in the minds of the masses. Show us how wide and loyal the support of adherents to your own political parties is. Show us how stringently you adhere to your own standards and codes of conduct in preserving your alleged humanitarian values when you support murderous dictatorships in South America, bomb the innocent, reap vast profits from the sweat of children, drain the third world of its resources, pollute our air, poison our water wells and leave legions of homeless and ill people to wander the streets of Toronto and the other cities of your world.

The contradictions are there not only for Marxists but for the bourgeoisie as well. It is only a matter of time before they will be resolved for all. When they are finally resolved, they will not be resolved by wishful thinking but by the focused, unified, conscious action of the workingclass of the world led by a leadership committed to its historic task.

Future closer because of Marx

Consciousness develops erratically and imperfectly. Thousands of workers occupying the massive Renault plant outside of Paris were asked by their own leaders what they wanted during the four week general strike of ten million workers in France in 1968-69. They responded with silence. They clearly knew what they did not want. They could not articulate their own fundamental solution–a socialist revolution. For that, a conscious revolutionary party is needed.

It is not events but the space between events, not experiences but the thoughts surrounding experiences, not only fully developed views but impulses and impressions, not only structured relationships but the relationships between such relationships, not only what is stated explicitly but what is assumed implicitly, not only what is believed but also what is not believed that help to reveal and shape and form the ever-growing reach of generations of working people to see themselves as masters of their own destinies. This synergetic consciousness will flower in its full majesty when workers will finally harness their vitality, their prowess and their potency to a vision of a better world in which the liberation of all becomes a precondition to the liberation of one, when a party, a leadership and a class will finally break the chains of illusion, face social reality and transform it once and for all. Then, humanity will rise to heights unforeseen and chart a course to realize its age-long strivings and dreams. When this will happen, we do not know for sure, but that future is already much closer because of the humanism and insight of that great genius, Karl Marx.

DITORIAL

AN APOLOGY!! ?
Those people should thank us for deporting them to a warmer climate and lower taxes!!

the Deportation of the Acadians: ...waiting 250 years for an apology!

LE DEVOIR
FONDÉ PAR HENRI BOURASSA
LE 10 JANVIER 1910
FAIS CE QUE DOIS

Directeur BERNARD DESCÔTEAUX
Rédacteur en chef JEAN-ROBERT SANSFAÇON
Vice-présidente finances et administration CATHERINE LABERGE
Directeur de l'information CLAUDE BEAUREGARD
Rédacteur en chef adjoint MICHEL VENNE
Directeurs adjoints de l'information PIERRE BEAULIEU, MARIE-ANDRÉE LAMONTAGNE, LOUIS LAPIERRE
Directeur artistique CHRISTIAN CIFFET
Directeur, ventes publicitaires NICOLE CALESTAGNE

DES EXCUSES?!
C'EST EUX QUI DEVRAIENT NOUS REMECIER POUR LES AVOIR DÉPORTÉS DANS UN PAYS CHAUD OÙ LES IMPÔTS SONT MOINS ÉLEVÉS!
LE DEVOIR
DÉPORTATION DES ACADIENS: DES EXCUSES ATTENDUES DEPUIS 250 ANS
?
GARNOTTE
2001.05.10

May 23, 2001

Dear Colleen:

Nice to hear from you; the group was interested in your letter.

I sent you the sketch of Michel Chossudovsky's speech because it was a beacon of political clarity in a sea of consensual "civil society" politics -- which locked up the whole mainstream opposition housed in the big "chapiteau" (big top) in Quebec's Lower City, financed by the Federal government, to which you had to be accredited in advance to attend, or be an official representative of the press or a certain trade union. This mainstream "Alternative Summit's line was not at all a principled opposition to the machinations of FTAA, as its' constituencies (the dispossessed masses of Latin America) called out for, but an admitted attempt to civilize and moderate the Summit, and render the FTAA humane.

In the name of these dispossessed masses of Latin America, the Alternate Summit representatives spoke only of co-ordinating the various NGO's (non-governmental organizations) to lead these masses into self-help, including resistance to their governments of course, but totally without reference to existing opposition political parties within these countries, or to the problems of coalitions (popular versus united fronts -- the concept of independent working class political power being virtually taboo). Any frank characterization of the ruling regimes (any real exposure of the fraudulent nature of "democracy" in these countries) was largely absent..

I remember at one very general panel discussion on local organization in Columbia (the topic was advertised as a critique of the US-sponsored anti-drug campaign in Columbia) it was only in the last 120 seconds of the question period that someone in the audience raised the question of the guerrila fronts and whether we should support them, of political opposition in the capital. Well, this question was never addressed while all lesser matters received exhaustive treatment (the brief mention of the misdirected "war on drugs" being in reality a North American --cartel distribution and consumption-- problem was enthusiastically received.).

Against this largely bland --undoubtedly informative--narration limited to the activities of NGOs in a few countries, fundamentally avoiding any political comment, Chossudovsky's sharp and decisive characterizations of the FTAA process was a welcome relief, and obviously the most important political contribution to the whole week's proceedings -- and very enthusiastically received too, at standing-room only audiences at three sessions at two suburban CEGEPs (collegiate institutes, which had suspended classes for the whole week). But, his contributions, though they provided the political impetus and theoretical foundations of Alternative Summit, and all the actions at the Wall, received no media acknowledgement; not even in events coverage in Toronto -- not even the "left-wing" media. I alerted the folks at Judy Rebick's new website, www.rabble.ca, to the fact of his speech, but it was sloughed off by Judy to her "editor" without comment...

Chussodovsky himself, to a question raised by myself and other questions, disavowed any political affiliation, and to questions of alternative political action was just as vague as the Rebuilding the Left tendencies now "flowering" across the country (though he has been vaguely associated with the FI and has the confident and eloquent speaking style of a Mandel- in 3 languages).

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Of course you are right to criticize his general statement "we must democratize the unions." It sounds like an "outsider" job, or a "top-down" job -- but he also squarely denounced the QFL (FTQ) leadership for accepting an invitation to attend the official Summit (along with Greenpeace, etc.) so the latter is not likely. We in the Group consider the development of militant caucuses within the unions as critical. As you mention some local leaderships are much more to the left than their memberships, but they in turn form de facto caucuses within their national unions. I know from personal experience in the old rail-truck union (CBRT-GW) how powerful a tool even the most elemental caucus can be on single (economic) issues (let alone political ones.) We share the tradition of the long-term opposition caucus in the DeHavilland UAW in the sixties (Hugh Dowson, Stu Sinclair), not to mention Toronto Local 938 Teamsters (Harry Paine) -- both experiences in which Ross Dowson played a pivotal role in developping, by the way. (The Vancouver comrades have a similar history, the details of which will be brought to light when the RD archives are researched.) From these experiences we know that opposition tendencies within unions can be both "factional" (non-political, around certain individuals seeking clique control -- but even these we've supported if they are fighting for more democracy, or a more militant policy)-- or they might be led by Marxists who are conscious of the political implications.

Why are workers (why have workers, now in BC) deserted the NDP and embraced Alliance/neo-liberal BC Liberal Party politics? That is a complex question best answered by considering the broad picture of the ebb and flow of proletarian consciousness in Canada, starting with: does this signal a move to the right, overall, in workers' thinking, or a move toward passivity, or labor peace, a developping quiesence in the class struggle?

I don't believe anybody in Canada believes this: boss or worker. Quite apart from shifting worker political party alliegances, we're in a period of wild gyrations in Canadian bourgeois politics, of desperate soul-searching on the Right as well as attacks on the "Centre" (Federal Liberals). This growing crisis almost overshadows the crisis in labor politics. We're faced now with a single party of bourgeois stability, Cretien's Liberals, which seem to be esconced in power for another decade, if only because this one bourgeois party is the only one in Canada which straddles the two nations, however incompletely -- and furthermore is the only party within the foreseeable future of parliamentary politics likely to do so.)

Within this context, I think, the defeat of the NDP in its unique stronghold, British Columbia, despite the overwhelming nature of the defeat, can only be conjunctural. In fact, this defeat will serve to prove the inevitable survival of the NDP in BC and nation-wide (or it's labor-party equivalent as the New Party, or whatever) because what is replacing the BC-NDP is not some consensual, class-collaborationist government, but a class-warfare "Liberal" party (which must become, and is already, an embarassment to the mainstream, Federal Liberals) -- a party of bourgeois combat as militant or moreso than Ontario's Harris government -- something that the working people of BC cannot live with beyond a short "neo-Liberal" holiday.

The visceral need for a labor party to protect the unions' very survival will now come to the fore -- if not in the NDP then it's homologous* political form -- a development to be guaranteed by the bourgeois excesses of the BC Liberal regime.

As to why this exercise in crisis had to take place, you alluded to it in your letter: the destabilization campaign by the bourgeois press (not only in BC, but across Canada) -- the decisive factor in the reigning ideology of the ruling class which we Marxists recognize as dominant in any society. But why this assault, why this all-out onslaught which parallelled the anti-Rae government class warfare in Ontario? Bourgeois society is becoming more and more polarized; domination of the Canadian economy by American capital more and more complete, and with the collapse of the Soviet Union there is no longer any reason for the bourgeoisie to "tolerate" any form of working class political opposition (in North America especially, since the one manifestation of it on the continent is viewed as marginal & vulnerable, unlike the BLP in Britain). The eradication of the BC-NDP (until now the anchor of the NDP in a key economic unit of Canada), is seen as an important primary task of globalization in North America.

The question of the survival of the NDP is on the order of the day in Federal politics. But the question also involves the survival of the union movement itself, in BC and across Canada -- the NDP was

*parallel

simply it's political survival tool (and the impetus back in 1959-1961, let .us not forget, was Joey Smallwood's attempts to smash the Woodworkers strike in Newfoundland.) No matter how right-wing the present NDP leadership becomes (assuming it does not morph somewhat to the activist left as Alexa wishes to take it, due to right-wing and Steelworker brass opposition); no matter how centrists like Axworthy and Caplan campaign to cut the NDP adrift of union influence, the increasing and burning need for an NDP-like formation to continue as the first line of political defence of the union movement, to complement it's limited economic defence -- the strike -- (both forms to preserve the bureaucracy, to be sure) -- will dictate the continuation of labor political action in some form in Canada. The radical Left refuses to recognize that the social-democratic tradition has been firmly implanted in Canadian political soil (and furthermore is actually defended by a small but influential section of the Canadian petty-bourgeoisie to boot, which fears the outright right-wing Americanization of Canada; sentiment reflected in papers like the Toronto Star, Canada's largest daily -- all the bourgeois press continues to accord the NDP major party status despite it's crises -- even the National Post couldn't do without the major NDP punching-bag.)

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I could go on, "off the top of my head" as you put it, but it's good to have this discussion. We would do well to have a detailed review of your thoughts about the BC election, and the BC union movement, which are truly of key importance to the labor movement in this country. Looking forward to your comments and critique,

Comradely, John Darling, for the Forward Group

Toronto Star Mar 3/02

THOMAS WALKOM

We just don't learn from history

A MAN named Ross Dowson died last month. I didn't know Dowson. But he was a Toronto figure whose adult life spanned the insanity known as the Cold War and whose fate and obsessions have eerie echoes today in the post-Sept. 11 world.

Dowson probably would have called himself a socialist and a revolutionary. Indeed, at one point, he demanded (and received) a printed apology from The Star when it referred to him as an "ex" radical.

Others called him a Trotskyist. In the post-Soviet era, it is a word that seems almost quaint.

But in the years just after World War II, when the Soviet Union was still an ally, when communism had followers in Toronto and when the epic battles between those two figures of the Bolshevik revolution — Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky — were still of recent memory, it was a word treated with more respect.

In 1948, the then 30-year-old Dowson took his first of many runs at the mayor's office in Toronto. As candidate of the Revolutionary Workers' Party, he did surprisingly well, picking up 11 per cent of the vote. The next year, he did even better, winning almost 20 per cent.

But the drumbeats of the Cold War made it difficult, not only for the Moscow-aligned Communist Party of Canada but for small-c communists like Dowson who had no truck with the Soviet Union.

Dowson kept running for mayor; he kept losing. He ran twice for a seat in the Commons, both times against cabinet ministers.

Not surprisingly, both times he lost.

Trotskyism never swept Canada. At its peak, Dowson's League for Socialist Action (successor to the Revolutionary Workers' Party) said it had 200 to 300 members nationwide.

That was probably an exaggeration. Dowson once testified he used numerous pseudonyms in his newsletters to suggest that his movement had more members than it did.

Still, the league's size and apparent ineffectiveness didn't stop Dowson from becoming a target of the RCMP. In 1972, the Mounties embarked on a secret operation to break up the League for Socialist Action and destroy the credibility of both Dowson and another failed Trotskyist mayoralty candidate named John Riddell.

Under the code name Operation Checkmate, the Mounties circulated fabricated medical reports to league members, alleging that Riddell was under psychiatric care and subject to violent outbursts. Their aim, it later came out, was to sow suspicion and dissension within a group that was already no stranger to paranoia.

And it worked. The group disintegrated in mutual recriminations; Dowson lost his job.

An Ontario Provincial Police investigation into the matter later concluded that the Mounties had been waging a secret war against Dowson and his Trotskyists since 1960 and that these actions involved "at least the apparent commission of crime . . . by the RCMP security service."

What followed was a 13-year attempt by Dowson to bring his persecutors to book.

Yet at almost every turn, he was thwarted by the state. In 1980, Roy McMurtry, then Ontario's attorney-general (now the province's chief justice) intervened to prevent Dowson and Riddell from laying charges against the Mounties, arguing that such a prosecution was not in the public interest — and that anyway, the two would almost certainly never win.

It took three years of appeals before the Supreme Court of Canada overturned McMurtry and said Dowson had the right to lay charges.

McMurtry may have been incorrect in law. But he certainly knew his province's judiciary. In 1985, 13 years after the RCMP dirty tricks incident, all of Dowson's charges against the Mounties were thrown out by lower courts.

He couldn't even win in small claims court.

Ironically, Dowson's ultimately futile efforts won him support among those who had no truck with Trotskyism (Trotsky himself had never been finicky about dispensing rough justice). Dowson's case became, briefly, a *cause célèbre* for civil libertarians. Lawyer Clayton Ruby called it "shameful" that the state could persecute a private individual with such impunity.

"This is not only wrong," Ruby told The Star in 1986, "but it is one that would come back to haunt our society."

Prophetic words. Though much was made about the Mounties' dirty tricks campaigns (a new spy agency, the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service, was constructed to take over their counter-espionage role), few permanent lessons were learned.

All it took was a new threat — this time from Islamic terrorists rather than alleged Moscow subversives — to cause the federal government to, once again, go overboard in giving police and courts extraordinary powers.

I don't know how much Dowson followed the post-Sept. 11 events. He suffered a debilitating stroke in 1989.

But if he had, this Cold War veteran probably would have found the last few months familiar — public hysteria, a tough new security law, governments determined to do what they want without observing the niceties.

Tom Walkom's e-mail is twalkom@thestar.ca

ROSS DOWSON

Canadian Revolutionary 1917-2002

You are invited to attend a

Memorial Meeting

Saturday, June 8, 2002

1-6 pm.

Oakham House, Ryerson Campus,
63 Gould St., Toronto
(corner Church St., 1 blk. north Dundas Street, public parking across Church St.)

1:00 Sign-in and Refreshments
2:00 "The Life & Times of Ross Dowson" Video Presentation
3:00 Open Forum
5:00 Complimentary Hot Buffet & Cash Bar

All proceedings will be aurally recorded, and a video camera will be available for those who wish to go on record, following the forum.

(The complete DVD including coverage of the Memorial will be available at a later date.)

Information:
Lois Bedard 416-239-8467, Harry Kopyto 416-907-5128,
John Darling 416-928-3086 <johndarling130@hotmail.com>

RSVP May 25th

Preview date with video recording:
Wed. June 5, 3-5pm Oakham Room, 2nd floor

On the 2003 Federal NDP Leadership Convention, Toronto

Assessment of Bev Meslo's campaign

Date: Sun, 26 Jan 2003

From: Gord Doctorow - Date: Sunday, 26 January 2003

Comrades,

Harry and I have been chatting about the leadership campaign and, in particular, the showing of the Socialist Caucus candidate, Bev Meslo. I will leave it up to Harry to add his own comments to the ones I am making. John, as well, has provided his own perspective from the floor of the convention, and perhaps he will add his own comments online.

First, I think that Bev's positive biographical identification with her class struggle, working-class tradition was very inspiring. Moreover, her sharp criticism of NDP leaders who fail to live up to policy decisions made by conventions was a unique contribution to the debate, specifically her shot at (Bob) Rae's Social Con-Trick, as she called it. Also, her terming the NDP as the antiwar party was distinguishable from the other candidates. On the issues of war on Iraq, homelessness, etc., her contributions were welcome, but certainly not different from what many of her opponents were putting forward.

She did identify herself as a socialist. But so did Pierre Ducasse (repeatedly) and Jack Layton (once). Speaking of Ducasse, in his very effective speech (radical, reformist), he played up the issue of democratic participation in economic life by emphasizing co-operatives and explicitly rejecting the notion of widespread nationalizations. This jolted me into thinking about how Bev's speech had nothing to say about public ownership, thus breaking with a principled tradition of the Left Caucus. This, of course, is no mere tradition. Public ownership is at the heart of socialism; it is the alternative vision to capitalism. Bev certainly played up activism and criticizing failures of the opportunist leadership of the NDP, but she did not offer the concrete alternative. Ducasse's vision and Layton's vision of community participation, a vague concept that has little class content were thus not challenged by Bev.

On the issue of activism and linking to the militant, social activists in the antiwar and anti-WTO campaigns, I think there was more or less a chorus of agreement amongst the contenders and but for the phrase of terming the NDP as the antiwar party, Bev did not distinguish herself. Indeed, this was noticed by Libby Davies, commenting on CBC radio, who expressed concern about how Bev's voice did not seem to connect in any concrete way to these movements. I agree. At this time, the question of building an activist party is on the agenda. It appears to me that the left needed to pose re-organizing the structures of the NDP into antiwar, anti-WTO committees with buttons and banners reflecting the NDP's progressive program (out of NATO, for example) and reaching out to activist youth. This tradition did exist in the 80's and early 90's in the Ontario NDP, but has withered on the vine. Yet, at a time when prominent leadership candidates, like Layton, are calling for support for extra-parliamentary movements, there is nothing but inertia

within the NDP, with minor exceptions like Svend Robinson's provision of Ottawa NDP facilities to assist protestors for the Quebec Summit demos.

Reflecting further on this point, I would say that the Socialist Caucus campaign, in a way, was doomed to be a bit abstract because no matter how good the speech, and Bev is a damned good speaker, the campaign needed to be anchored by a base within the party in order to command serious attention. Clearly, Bev's campaign didn't garner a significant vote. The results were disappointing, not because she didn't try hard enough, but because a base was missing and the candidates for the most part played to the left on significant issues, except for public ownership. Layton had a strong left appeal on the issue of war and the military; he called for a freeze on military spending.

The space for a left alternative seemed marginal. Even the question of the NDP being a labor party was put to rest by all the candidates, who all paid dutiful homage to labor. Bev's ardent support for labor's struggles certainly was important nonetheless, but she missed out on other important aspects of socialist policy. For example, Ducasse made reference to anti-racism and support for gay, lesbian, and bisexual people's rights. These things may not have been a primary focus, but I would expect that New Democrats would expect that the socialist candidate would have made the record in her speech.

So, where did the left vote go? A lot of it went to Layton, Comartin, and Ducasse I think (and so does Harry). If this be true, then one has to question the utility of Bev's slogan "Turn Left" and her focus on criticism of the Third Way. This seems out of phase by two conventions. These were not the issues before the convention. Building an activist party through structures and program were.

Finally, I wish to comment on the One Member One Vote aspect of the convention. In my view, this was an important boost to the image of the NDP as a grassroots party. All members had a say in who the leader would be. This fact made it possible to get a widespread hearing and involvement of the left within the party. Note that this voting method did not cut across delegates deciding matters of policy and voting on the other internal officers of the party. It gave the NDP a populist edge which is doubtless attractive to activists.

The campaign left us with some valuable lessons to be learned for the future of the left struggling within the labor party and the labor movement. Certainly, we are now in a position to assess what the left can do to improve its base within the NDP and how running a leadership campaign can be utilized as a springboard to strengthen and broaden the left base within the party of labor.

Additional notes on the NDP leadership convention

by John D., Jan.29/03

Convention attendance started around 1100 and grew to over 1800 by its end, with 1066 voting delegates whose votes amounted to about 4,000 with the union-weighted votes tallied. In addition there were 40,000 votes by internet and post prior to

convention. This total translated to 58,000 votes after the weighting of union votes, which the 2001 Winnipeg convention had decided would comprise 25% of the final result. During the leadership campaign membership increased 41% to some 80,000.

TV media dominated, with CPAC cable providing live coverage of the whole event and national CBC also present throughout, and two other smaller stations also covering smaller portions of the "historic" convention as the party brass billed it.

With high-priced registration underway all Friday morning Jan. 24 (from 8 am, while the call to order was at 9am,) unannounced registration had taken place the day before to ensure that the mass of delegates could take their seats by then. Rapidly, the adoption of the agenda, the rules and committees, and the resolutions committee reports were made, going completely unchallenged. These first few minutes virtually cemented control of the party apparatus over convention from the very beginning.

No left (or center or right-wing) delegate questioned this total disregard for any process of party "renewal." As in days of yore, all resolutions discussion periods were trimmed to half-hour segments (!) and of the original 125 pages of resolutions submitted by clubs and unions had been vetted, combined and digested into about 20% of that total, then prioritized for presentation to the convention floor – all this by an unelected select leadership committee rather than by any committee process resembling "renewal" – one struck by convention, or representative of clubs and union locals, for instance. Thereby, the new lists of resolutions or "composite" resolutions had been adopted for discussion without any input from their proposers. This practice is "par for the course" – certainly not "renewal."

Like a pregnancy, the gender of the convention had been set at conception, with no questions asked by the progenitors. Because of the moribund, demoralized state of the party, no individuals or organized left other than Socialist Caucus were on hand to offer the slightest challenge to leadership control — but there was complaining from all shades of opinion about convention procedures during the rest of the 3-day confab. Socialist Caucus abandoned a vital opportunity to demonstrate the need for genuine democratic renewal and an invaluable hearing from delegates. Had Bev Meslo challenged a single one of these points her visibility and support would have doubled or trebled.

One notable near-fatality of the leadership's snubbing the "renewal" process was evident when the first nation's chief spokesman barely squeaked in a special resolution on native policy. It had been the subject of prior discussions and appeals, and many abortive attempts to bring to the floor. Finally, only via a special, unanimous, contested, and re-voted amendment of the sacred "Order of the Day" at the very final moment of convention, before victor Jack Layton made his acceptance speech, was this native delegate allowed to present his resolution! It could not possibly be debated of course, only shuffled through anonymously and ignominiously. Thus party "Native policy" is destined to be ignored not just by caucus, but by convention itself!

Not so fortunate a "policy" was the phantom document on Quebec! This policy turned out to be a shadowy ghost, a fleeting rumour. Veteran John Harney asked this writer about this document, which he was assured had been discussed early Friday morning - but I *(personally –ed.)* counter-assured him this was not the case. Intrigued, I checked with the young party President who confirmed there was such a document which had been distributed to delegates However the convention office could only ask me to check with the delegate ushers, who distribute resolutions. The ushers did not remember a Quebec document being distributed. Furthermore, none of the Quebec team for leadership candidate Pierre Ducasse said they had ever seen such a document! Unbelievable! - a document on Quebec which the young party President affirms exists is unknown by the Quebec leadership candidate (although supporter Harney heard about it.) Did the flashy deal-maker Ducasse have anything to do about the disappearance of this document? — he certainly did not raise the issue, or object. It is very likely, given the central importance of Quebec, that such a document might indeed have existed – however it remains in the domain of the "spirit world," and we shall never know its fate – except we all know its consequences, because despite all the French language we heard at convention (including Ducasse's speeches) - Québécois sovereigntism and the prime question of the status of the French language was never raised. Only in fleeting terms did leadership candidate Joe Comartin mentioned Quebec self-determination along with Native and Palestinian self-determination. The NDP brass was happy — determined — to remain completely silent on Quebec. As a Toronto *Globe & Mail* columnist noted, the NDP talks about national childcare and denticare programs as though it is unaware that Quebec has long legislated such programs, and further that a NDP national program would have to accommodate Quebec's demand for provincial (national) control over such federal programs. And as all manner of other columnists rant, with some truth, the NDP can never hope to win power in Ottawa by playing rabbit-in-the-tophat with the issues of Quebec nationhood.

NPD Leadership Convention discussion

(Email Feb. 2, 2003 -- Forward Group reporter –J.D.)

Comrades:

On Thursday AM Ken Sutherland suffered a small stroke which temporarily paralyzed his left side. He was able to get help and after two days in intensive care has been moved to a regular bed, and is due to go home on Mon. 27th.

I talked to Ken about the NDP convention, where Jack Layton won on the first ballot with over 52% of the vote. The markedly left nature of the convention, with its agitational anti-Iraq-war speeches by Alex (Alexa McDonough) and all 6 leadership candidates, plus their apparent heavy commitment to renewal of the party (along with Howard Hampton's crusade against privatization of Ontario Hydro which spilled over to re-nationalization of privatized public generation), in effect rendered the campaign of the Socialist Caucus entirely redundant. Despite wide publicity and militant activist speeches by SC candidate Bev Meslo, her campaign won an unprecedented low left-caucus vote, a humiliating result (less than 2% of the actual vote and 1.1% of the union-weighted total vote).

B. W. of Socialist Action led the abortive, ultraleft sectarian SC campaign, which repeatedly distinguished itself by chanting "go left" when all the other 5 candidates were talking left and repeating how the party must connect with the movement outside the Party. The SC campaign also doggedly chanted "No war No Way" when all other 5 candidates were loudly opposed to the (Iraq) war (and outgoing leader Alexa made it a major theme of two speeches.) Worse, the SC section insisted on repeatedly counterposing themselves as "THE socialists in the party" when all 5 other candidates were obviously jockeying for the militant, renewal left vote, i.e., the vast majority of delegates considered themselves socialist in one form or another.

B's blind and persistent sectarianism reached it's apogee when during the "triumphal" march of Bev's tiny corps of militants on convention floor, the union songs he chose for the campaign march switched suddenly and inexplicably to verses of "The International"! The entire convention reacted good-naturedly to this puerile posturing by laughing it off, and we in Bev's solidarity march cringed and laughed too. It was universally taken as some kind of lefty-syndicalist joke. In reality, this travesty of imposing the communist hymn on a social-democratic convention, even one in an exceptionally militant mood and forgiving of such "gauche" behaviour, is an unforgiveable breach of revolutionary socialist conduct.. In spite of the sectarian nature of the SC campaign I voted on principle for Bev as the revolutionary candidate and forced myself to take part in this social-democratic charade (a convention floor parade) — a frankly stupid tradition of American bourgeois party conventions that the NDP has adopted. I think that a healthy left caucus would resist engaging in such antics (that's a tactical question to be sure.)

The left missed a big opportunity to cash in on the excellent political atmosphere of the convention, including the very impressive left-social-democrat victory speech by Jack Layton following his victory, when he vigorously attacked the right-wing Liberal-Alliance drift of the government, and then in a gesture of consolation toward his

opponents, he generously praised Bev Meslo's activist campaign. Thus this militant leadership convention posed directly the NDP taking power in Ottawa – what we've always championed — Labor to Power!

Toward that goal, one genuine positive note as reported by a *Toronto Star* columnist: the NDP has, according to some polls, recently achieved between an unprecedented 12% to 18% of popular support in Quebec - a fact which startled the NDP brass and resulted in a lot of French popping up in convention speeches — and all candidates (except Bev) were pretty well bilingual, to one degree or another...

To:
From: John Darling <fwdsail@idirect.com>
Subject: NDP convention discussion (and your account)
Cc:
Bcc:
Attached:

Dear

We are approaching the first anniversary of the death of Ross Dowson (Feb. 17, 2002). And, I would like to remind you about the tribute to his life and times that we produced, for which we have received many congratulatory comments.

Meanwhile, work has begun on a Dowson anthology, a collection of all of Ross's large volume of writing: everything from letters and notes to speeches and articles. It's shaping up to be quite a fascinating testament of our past -- a lot of it remarkably fresh and relevant for today. While a published version is being planned, much of it will hopefully become available on the internet sooner.

Also this week (the first week of February), National Archives will be transporting all of Ross's archives to Ottawa, to add to the "Macdonald-Spector" archives already there. These archives have been organized and indexed by the Forward Group, and are thereby much more accessible to students of the Trotskyist movement -- the indexes describing the contents hopefully also on the internet.

The Group's tribute to "The Life and Times of Ross Dowson," in video and DVD format, was funded largely by a bequest from Ontario resident Art Grey, but also through the resources of the Forward Group.

This email is to remind you that as of today your account for the purchase of _____ set in the amount of $____.00 is still outstanding. We urgently need payment from you to recoup our costs and continue the work on Ross's anthology. Can you please send it in a.s.a.p.

In addition, I enclose part of a discussion and evaluation of the recent NDP leadership convention in Toronto. Perhaps you have seen some of this material before -- I regret the repeat. Perhaps you would like to contibute to the discussion as well -- I'd be interested in hearing your views.

Comradely, John Darling
for the Forward Group

Date: Sat., 25 Jan 2003
To: Forward Group
Re: Ken Sutherland, the NDP Convention

NDP demands clarity on Canada's role in Bush's war

<http://ndp.ca/campaigns/endpwar2.html> Friday, March 21, 2003
"NDP: The Latest on Canada and Bush's War"

(WEBSITE EDITORIAL COMMENT; The groundswell of opposition in Canada and worldwide to the US bombing and invasion of Iraq in March 2003, which resulted in mass demonstrations against the war in Canadian cities, impelled the Parliamentary caucus of the New Democratic Party to the following frank and principled protest. For instance, JTF2 is a reference to the Canadian secrecy-bound, sacred cow special forces commando group.

The following is an email bulletin showing how Canada's labor party acting alone in Parliament under mass pressure, and succeeding in forestalling major Canadian military participation. Notable was its mobilizing its forces across the country in demonstrations against the invasion, resulting in an action of some 80,000 on Yonge Street in Toronto and a larger number in Montreal, along with multiple local protest actions.

(The email consists of excerpts from Hansard and comments by the NDP web editor. Sub-heads bolded by the web editor.)

NDP demands clarity on Canada's role in Bush's war

In the House of Commons, the NDP again demanded clarity on the role of Canadian personnel in the Gulf. As you can see, no such clarity was forthcoming:

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has talked of respecting the American decision. What we would like of the Prime Minister is that he respect his own decision, the Canadian government decision, enough to make sure that it is not undermined or violated in any way by Canadian forces in the gulf participating either directly or indirectly in the war on Iraq.

Could the Prime Minister tell us, because there has been speculation to this effect, whether or not a JTF2 is involved in any way in the war on Iraq?

Right Hon. Jean Chretien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, they are not involved in the war in Iraq.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that approaches the kind of clarity that we look for from the Prime Minister more often. I wonder if he could also tell us whether any Canadian frigate is escorting any vessel involved in supporting the war on Iraq.

Hon. John McCallum (Minister of National Defence, Lib): Mr. Speaker, the NDP should understand that while Canada and the United States have reached a different conclusion on Iraq, it remains as true today as it was a week ago that the United States is Canada's strongest friend and ally.

This means that our commitment to jointly defend the continent is unchanged. It means that our commitment to ensure that the border is never a security risk for Americans is unchanged, and it means that our commitment to the war on terrorism is as strong as ever. Therefore the last thing we wish to do is that when the risk of terrorism gets higher we take our ships away. That is not what the government is doing.

NDP demands clear position on the legality of war

Around the world, governments and legal experts are calling Bush's war on Iraq illegal. But here in Canada, there's not a word on the legality of the war. In the House of Commons, the Liberals ignore the issue:

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is no justification in law for George Bush's war. The majority of international legal experts agree on that. Article 51 of the UN charter is clear, so is Kofi Annan. Pre-emptive strikes are not in conformity with the UN charter and therefore are illegal.

Does the Prime Minister share this view, and if so, why is he so timid about saying so?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib): Mr. Speaker, the president of the United States and the United States administration has made it very clear that they are taking steps in self-defence which are authorized under United Nations resolutions which they have cited as legal reasons in support of their position.

The Prime Minister has made it very clear that Canada's decision was made both on the basis of analysis of the legal situation and also the right political climate in which intervention is appropriate in these circumstances.

We have made our decision. They have made their sovereign decision in their right to make their decision about their self-defence. We respect that, and we respect the fact that they consider the decision we make is our sovereign decision.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the question is about the illegality of this war.

Even Henry Kissinger agrees that pre-emptive strikes are not permitted under international law, but not our Prime Minister and not our foreign affairs minister. So much for being the great defenders of the United Nations.

Thirty-one Canadian professors of international law, the UN Secretary General, and Henry Kissinger for heavens sake, have no hesitation about saying that the war in Iraq is illegal.

Does this government agree, yes or no?

Hon. Bill Graham (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib): Mr. Speaker, this government made its decision based upon whether or not it was appropriate for us to participate in military intervention in Iraq in circumstances where we considered all legal and all political considerations, including those about the preservation of the Security Council system which we consider appropriate and important. We considered all matters in which we could make a helpful contribution to the preservation of peace in the world. That is what guides us, not a discussion of legal principles. Those are very important. We regard our legal principles as key, but they are a part of an important process whereby we make decisions in terms of Canada's interests and Canada's sacred.

Graham's answer is absurd. First, nobody questions that the United States has made a sovereign decision -- the issue is if that a sovereign decision that violates the UN Charter. Second, the issue isn't whether Bush uses UN resolution 1441 to justify the war -- it's whether he is correct in doing so. Third, the issue isn't whether Bush says it's a war about self defence --it's whether he is correct.

NDP Demands Canadian Ships be Withdrawn
"Either Canada is involved in Bush's war or we are not": Layton

OTTAWA - After a week of seeking clarity on whether Canadian personnel in the Gulf were involved in George Bush's war on Iraq, NDP Leader Jack Layton today called for ships to be withdrawn.

"It is clear Canadian frigates are escorting ships involved in a war in which Canada is not involved," said Layton. "This is complicity in an illegal war which Canadians oppose, and the government cannot explain where Operation Apollo ends and where Bush's war on Iraq begins.

"Either Canada is involved in Bush's war or we are not. The Liberals cannot have it both ways," said Layton. "Parliament has authorized involvement in Operation Apollo, but has not authorized any involvement whatsoever in Bush's war on Iraq. If escorting ships that are helping to illegally invade Iraq isn't involvement, what is?"

Each day this week, the NDP has demanded the government clarify the involvement of Canadian personnel in the war on Iraq. Each day, the government refused to answer, although did answer specific questions on the involvement of other personnel - notably JTF2 - in Bush's war. Last week, Canadian ships were permitted to travel further north to Kuwait after previously operating only as far north as the Strait of Hormuz. On Thursday, the Liberals voted against withdrawing personnel that may be involved in the war from the Gulf, yet voted in favour of not being involved in Bush's war.

"How can Canada say it's uninvolved in the war when we are escorting ships of war?" asked Layton. "The NDP repeatedly sought reassurance that there were rules of engagement that protected Canadians from being involved in Bush's war. There are clearly no such rules, and our personnel must be withdrawn."

Canada has more personnel in the Gulf than all but three members of Bush's 'coalition of the willing.'

"Canada's position on the war is again becoming murky and confused," said Layton. "On whether George Bush's pre-emptive strike without any UN authorization is legal, Canada says Bush thinks it is. And when specifically asked if Canada is involved in Bush's war, the government refuses to answer.

This is completely unacceptable."

Liberals vote against motion to withdraw Canadian military personnel who could support war – NDP votes in favour of peace

Yesterday in Parliament, the Liberals voted against a Bloc Quebecois motion that called upon Canada to withdraw Canadian personnel from the Gulf who could be used to support Bush's war.

Canada has some 1,700 personnel in or on their way to the Gulf. Of these, 1,300 could be used to support the war by serving on ships escorting US and UK ships of war, flying in surveillance planes providing data to the US Fifth Fleet or serving as soldiers on exchange with US and UK forces.

Last week, Canadian ships in the region were permitted to travel as far north as Kuwait - previously they were much farther south and did not travel further north than the Strait of Hormuz.

Canada deployed this military personnel to the region for the 'war on terror' but it's increasingly unclear where the 'war on terror' ends and the war on Iraq begins.

Saturday, March 22
Peace Rallies, Vigils and protests around Canada

Communities across Canada are responding immediately to George Bush's military action in Iraq.

A full list of activities and contacts is also available at the Canadian Peace Alliance www.acp-cpa.ca/febemergencyresponses.htm web site (all times local, events subject to change, please verify in your community)

Join in on the activities and let your voices be heard

Saturday, March 22, 2003

Barrie. 5:00pm, Fred Grant Square
Calgary: 2:00pm, Olympic Plaza
Canmore: 12:00pm, Stan Rogers Stage
Charlottetown: 2:00pm,

Province House Edmonton: 1:00pm, Churchill Square
Grand Forks: 1:00pm, Gyro Park
Halifax: Gather, 1:00pm, The Commons; Rally 2:30pm,
U.S. Consulate Kingston: 5:00pm,
City Hall Lethbridge: 12:00pm,
City Hall Medicine Hat: 1:00pm, Speaker's Corner
Midland: Rally, 12:00pm, Library
Montreal: Large demonstration, 1:00pm, Dominion Square (Peel & Rene Levesque)
Orangeville: 12:00pm, Orangeville Town Hall
Ottawa: Rally, 12:00pm, Parliament Hill
Penticton: 1:00pm, Penticton Secondary School
Powell River: Candle Light Vigil, 7:00pm, Willingdon Beach
Quebec City: Rally, 1:00pm Centre Lucien-Borne
Regina: 12:00pm Cenotaph
Toronto: 5:00pm, U.S. Consulate
Uxbridge: March, 1:00pm; vigil, 7:30pm, Public Library
Thunder Bay : 1:00pm, Memorial and 11th
Vancouver: visit www.stopwar.ca
Winnipeg : 1 :00pm U.S. Consulate
Yellowknife: 12:15pm City Hall

Sunday, March 23, 2003
Lindsay, Ontario: Prayer Vigil, 7:00pm, Cambridge Street United Church,
Newmarket: Peace Vigil, 7:00pm, Fairy Lake Park
Port Alberni: Candle Light Vigil, 7:00pm Alberni Valley United Church
Whitehorse: Vigil, 7:00pm, Whitehorse United Church

Please forward this message to friends!
Visit www.ndp.ca for the latest information on Canada and Bush's war on Iraq.

From Iraq to Palestine

END THE OCCUPATIONS

RALLY & MARCH

Saturday May 24th
1 P.M.
U.S. Consulate
360 University Ave.

called by: COALITION to STOP the WAR

SUPPORTED BY OVER 40 LABOUR, FAITH AND CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS
FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.NOWAR.CA OR CALL 416-588-5555

Obituaries f*rom THE GLOBE AND MAIL*
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13. 2005, BY M. J. STONE, MONTREAL

"CHARLES GAGNON, FLQ INTELLECTUAL LEADER 1939-2005

He promised to set Quebec alight with a crusade of bombs and fire. He later disavowed violence and supported the 1980 No campaign."

(Note: This article is abridged. However much of the article is factual and its information is of potential interest to our readers --Web Ed.)

He was a Marxist-Leninist who modeled himself after Che Guevara, the darling of the Cuban Revolution. A prominent agent of the FLQ, Charles Gagnon (...) later denounced violence and campaigned for the "No" forces in the 1980 Quebec referendum on sovereignty.

Mr. Gagnon was a university lecturer who spent more than four years in jail accused of crimes against the state. While sitting in Morifreal's Bordeaux prison in 1968, the intellectual leader of the Front d Libération du Québec outlined his organization's insurgency plans in a text titled *Feu sur l'Amérique*. Hoping to transform Quebec's francophone anger and resentment into an apocalyptic conflagration of revolutionary rage, Mr. Gagnon wrote: "And that is precisely our role as the revolutionary vanguard — to set off a spark. We must start fires everywhere in Quebec. We must speak fiery words, do fiery deeds and repeat them over and over."

From 1963 to 1969, the FLQ planted, on average, one bomb every 10 days somewhere in Quebec. Members of the FLQ, known as "felquistes," were trained and organized by Georges Schoeters, a Belgian revolutionary and an alleged agent of the KGB. Mr. Schoeters, a frequent visitor to Algeria and Cuba, fashioned the FLQ after the Algerian guerrillas he admired. The felquistes were organized into mdependenly operated units with such cell names as Viger, Louis Riel and Libération.

The revolution began in earnest on April 20, 1963, with a campaignof mailbox bombs and Molotov cocktails aimed at the English-speaking enclave ofWestmount. By October 7, Mr. Schoeters was in jail; he was sentenced to two five-year prison terms for his role in the violence.

After his incarceration, Mr. Gagnon and Pierre Vallières, a journalist and author of *Negres blancs d'Amérique,* became the FLQ's heart and soul.

On May 5, 1966, a cell of 20 felquistes led by the Gagnon and Vallières team set a bomb in the La Grenade shoe factory that killed Thérèse Morin, a secretary. Two months later, a bomb placed at Dominion Textile by the same group exploded prematurely, killing Jean Corbo, an FLQ member just days shy of his 17th birthday.

-=======start Box Photo CAPTION ======
In 1967, Charles Gagnon (centre) and Pierre Vallières faced charges of murder and armed robbery in connection with two explosions that killed a woman and a youth. They were represented by lawyer Michel Proulx. In later years (below), he was opposed to Quebec independence unless it was based on Marxist ideals.
==========end box==========

Mr. Gagnon and Mr. Vallières fled to the United Sates. In hopes of sparking a continent-wide revolution, they made contact with the Black Panthers in an attempt to coordinate strategies. On Sept. 26, 1966, the pair surfaced in New York in front of the United Nations to denounce the Canadian government for its treatment of imprisoned FLQ members. They were promptly seized and, after a lengthy extradition hearing, were sent back to Montreal on Jan. 13,1967. Two days later, both men were indicted on charges of murder, manslaughter, bombing and armed robbery.

For the next 41 months, Mr. Gagnon sat in Bordeaux prison before he was acquitted of murder and manslaughter and 11 of the 13 charges against him. The government's failure to convict was due in no small part to a successful defence campaign waged both inside and outside the courts. Public support in Quebec fell firmly on the side of the felquistes. Unions, students and civil liberty groups all rallied in support of the FLQ leaders and urged the government to drop all charges. For added emphasis, fellow felquistes hammered home the point with a strategically placed bomb they detonated behind the home of the prison warden. Angered by the slow pace of their trials, Mr. Gagnon and Mr. Vallières began a hunger strike that was joined by 400 other inmates.

Released from prison in February of 1970, Mr. Gagnon released a public statement that tried to unite the Quebec experience within Canada to the Palestinian situation with Israel. Seeking political support from the Palestine Liberation Organization, North Vietnam, Algeria and Cuba, his anti-American, anti-Zionist tirade praised the Palestinian resistance movement as a model that Quebec's insurgents should imitate.

"The ideal of the Palestinian resistance is identical to that of the Québécois, which rose in the heart of a people that history seemed to have doomed to a slow death following the English conquest of 1760," Mr. Gagnon declared. "But our revolution is far from having reached the state of organization that is the Palestinian insurgency. We are handicapped by the youth of our resistance movement. Despite this, the radicalization of social conflicts, and the development of an increasingly active class consciousness has resulted in a Quebec that, for the first time in its history, has the occasion to collectively organize for a war of popular liberation."

For all that, by the fall of 1970, the FLQ reluctantly accepted that its bombing campaign was not achieving any political payoff. Raising the ante, the organization changed tactics by opening a new front in their guerrilla war — a round of political kidnappings. On October 5,1970, British trade commissioner James Cross was abducted from his home by the Montreal Libération cell. On October 8, the

government capitulated to the kidnappers' demands and instructed CBC radio and television to broadcast an FLQ manifesto that called on the working class to rise up.

The rambling manifesto blamed wealthy anglophones for the circumstances that led to the kidnapping. "We have had our fill of promises of jobs and prosperity while we always remain the cowering servants and boot-lickers of the big shots who live in Westmount, the Town of Mount Royal, Hampstead and Outremont ... while we, the Québécois have not used all our means, including arms and dynamite, to rid ourselves of those economic and political bosses who are prepared to use every sort of sordid tactic to better screw us."

On October 10, a second FLQ group, from the Chenier cell, kidnapped Pierre Laporte, the Quebec minister of labour, while he played touch football with his family in front of his home.

Four days later, about 3,000 people gathered in Montreal's Paul Sauvé Arena to chant "FLQ! FLQ1" and to applaud Mr. Gagnon and Mr. Vallières. The pair used the rally as an opportunity to organize a strike next day by teachers and students that was intended to show support for the FLQ. On October 16, the day after the strike, Pierre Trudeau invoked the War Measures Act.

When the army rolled into Montreal, Mr. Gagnon was among the first 500 activists, unionists, teachers, writers, actors, singers and FLQ supporters to be arrested *(A leading member of the Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière was also arrested, others went into hiding- Web ed.)* The next day, the body of Mr. Laporte was discovered in the trunk of an abandoned car.

On Dec. 3, the RCMP identified the house where Mr. Cross was being held. After negotiations with the kidnappers, he was released and the four FLQ members responsible for his abduction were flown to Cuba on a Canadian armed forces aircraft.

After spending four months in jail, the conspiracy charges against Mr. Gagnon were thrown out of court. Even so, he stayed where he was. Still accused of being a member of a terrorist organization, he wasn't released until June 15,1971, when he was finally acquitted of all charges of sedition.

After his release from prison, Mr. Gagnon turned his back on the FLQ and devoted himself to Marxist ideals. He spearheaded the creation of the Communist organization "En Lutte." *(The Maoist tendency "In Struggle" --Web ed.)* Unlike Mr. Vallières, who would lend his support to the Parti Québécois, Mr. Gagnon was staunchly opposed to Quebec independence unless it was accompanied by a Marxist social reordering. Their friendship soon ended, and Mr. Vallières went on to become a prominent gay-rights advocate; he later joined a Franciscan-influenced religious order.

For his part, Mr. Gagnon denounced the PQ, calling its "reactionary" nationalism bourgeois. He argued that workers from across Canada should unite to create a single

socialist nation. Leading up to the 1980 Quebec referendum, he rallied in support of the No forces.

In the 1994 documentary, *La liberté* filmmaker Daniel Lafond, the husband of current Governor-General Michaelle Jean, brought together several former felquistes. Among them were Mr. Gagnon and Mr. Vallières. In the film, Mr. Gagnon questioned the wisdom of his violent past and insisted that his life had been marred by two handicaps: his association with the FLQ, and his association with violence. "It was a senseless chapter in Quebec history.... Maybe it's good for Bolivia, but here it made no sense."

Charles Gagnon was born in Ste-Cecile-du-Bic, Quebec, near Rimouski, on March 21,1939. He died of cancer in Montreal on November 17, 2005. He was 66.

Special to The Globe and Mail

Socialist Debate on Sharia Law in Ontario

Introduction

by Gordon Doctorow, June 23, 2006.

The two attachments represent two very opposing positions on the issue of whether to support Faith-Based Arbitration in the Ontario legal system. In particular, the question of adding Sharia Law-based tribunals to the already existing ones for Christians and Jews is the subject of a heated controversy in the left.

Dick Fidler, a long-time Marxist essayist and a lawyer argues in favor of Sharia Law tribunals as a way of fighting Islamophobia. On the other hand, Harry Kopyto, also a long-time Marxist writer and thinker and a legal agent, forcefully opposes Fidler's arguments. I've attached both positions for your consideration.

The issues are complex and the argumentation is well developed on both sides. So, it is exciting to read and compare. I won't pretend to be neutral: I'm definitely on Harry's side in the debate.

Read on.

Gord Doctorow

Dick Fidler's "Left on Sharia Law" document *(available at Socialist Voice.com)*

SAY NO TO FAITH-BASED ARBITRATION

A reply to Dick Fidler on Sharia Law

By Harry Kopyto

After a hiatus of several months, Richard Fidler, who has emerged as one of the strongest proponents on the left of faith-based arbitration, has surfaced again with an article entitled "Ontario's 'Sharia Law Controversy'; How Muslims Were Hung out to Dry" (*Socialist Voice* Issue 78, May 9, 2006). This time, in an earlier article by him published last year in *Socialist Voice* (McGuinty's Ban on Faith-Based Arbitration No Victory for Women's Rights), Fidler smears those on the left who oppose state enforced faith-based arbitration including Sharia Law in Ontario as "savaging" the Muslim community, sabotaging unity with Islamic, anti-imperialist forces and joining an Islamophobic "lobby" to deny followers of Islamic rights enjoyed by other religious groups. In the course of developing his argument, Fidler reveals a deep misunderstanding of how radical activists can form alliances with oppressed communities.

The impetus for Fidler's latest foray was the introduction this spring of Bill 27 following the announcement in the Ontario legislature on November 15, 2005 by Attorney General Michael Bryant proposing amendments that would subject Ontario family law disputes presently resolved through faith-based arbitration to "Canadian legal standards" and

thereby giving the decisions of religious tribunals the full compulsion of law. Fidler situates this announcement within what he calls an “Islamophobic campaign against 'Sharia Tribunals'". He also asserts that this campaign, supported by unidentified persons "on the left," has undermined an alliance with Muslims and other minorities in the fight against imperialist war and war-induced oppression.

As in his previous analysis, Fidler tends to obscure the line between voluntary faith-based arbitration within various religious communities and the wholesale introduction of state compulsion and public authority to decisions made at these cloistered private arbitration hearings which the pending legislation heralds. In fact, the massive outcry against the attempt to extend faith-based tribunals for Muslims that the Liberal government introduced and quickly rescinded last year was directed at clothing these decisions with state force while fully respecting the right to voluntary arbitration, a distinction Fidler avoids dealing with.

Yet this distinction is central to advancing the principal of separation of religion from the state, a fundamental precept that first came to fruition during the bourgeois-democratic revolutions that swept Europe and freed it of feudal theocracy. Those who favour public funding and state support for religious institutions have historically justified their demands on the basis of pre-existing rights and practices as in the instant case. This was the position, for example, taken by the provincial Tory government in 1985 when it argued that it was only making adjustments to a law which already provided funding to Catholic elementary schools when it extended it to secondary schools.

Fidler starts his article by trumpeting the advantages of faith-based arbitration to resolve family law disputes, which he heralds as the best thing since sliced bread. He points to the benefits of arbitration proceedings for resolving such disputes including privacy, confidentiality, expert mediators and decisions made by persons trusted by the parties. But at no point does Fidler, as a socialist, ask the question: why can't these values and benefits be introduced into the existing public family law court system? Why should socialists be advocating what amounts to privatization of the resolution of important social and financial issues? Why can't there be one unified family law system that reflects the diversity of the various communities, functions inexpensively and acts efficiently? Amina Sherazee, a Toronto lawyer and human rights activist, in an article published in the *New Socialist* on March 23, 2005 points out that religious arbitration "is a way for the government to offload many of the services it should be providing to make the legal system more relevant, responsive and accessible to religious, cultural and racial communities. To properly remedy the lack of legal services, the government would have to do a complete overhaul of the legal system..." In other words, religious arbitration is about the outsourcing of law and privatization of legal services. Wherefore art thou, Richard Fidler?

Fidler's romanticization of private family law tribunals does not accord with reality. In fact, the development of the arbitration and mediation business has undergone an explosive growth over the last 20 years as hundreds of lawyers scramble to access a burgeoning carriage trade which too often has fewer safeguards and more inequities then

the public judicial system itself. The disadvantages of the "really existing" arbitration system itself are totally ignored in Fidler's formalistic, one-sided approach; namely, the added expense of having to pay arbitrators, the lack of public scrutiny, the uneven and often poor quality of arbitrators and mediators, the virtual erasing of any rights of appeal, and the vulnerability of some participants (female and poor) to compromise their positions for fear of becoming more marginalized and expelled from their community. In contrast to Fidler's idealization of the arbitration process, this emerging branch of the legal profession exhibits some of the worst features of the public legal system itself: judicialization of substantive issues, arbitrary and inconsistent decisions that are irreversible in almost all cases, procedural wrangling that results in lengthy delays, and arbitrators who tend to lean heavily in favour of the institutional clients who feed them volumes of cases. Arbitration is no longer, if it has ever been, the cheap, fair alternative to going to court that Fidler believes it to be. Such elemental dysfunctions of the arbitration system do not even begin to approach the more fundamental unfairness in resolving family law disputes involving social and financial issues on the basis of religious principles which are inherently patriarchal, homophobic and historically grant males all sorts of property and other marital rights that women are denied on an a priori basis. As Amina Sherazee points out, "Because Muslim women often face cultural and linguistic barriers, threats of stigmatization and pressures of assimilation — all made worse by their economic inequality — there is no reliable way to guarantee that women's legal rights will be protected in Sharia arbitration hearings."

Nor is any of this unique to the Islamic community. Solel Synagogue's Rabbi Lawrence Englender stated in an interview published in the *Mississauga News* on November 5, 2004 (“Pros and Cons of Shari'a Law on Seminar Agenda”), "It is my belief that women don't get as fair treatment in Rabbinic Court as they would in Ontario Court. I believe that one of the tenets of western society is that we are all equal under the law and, therefore, there should be only one law for all citizens."

In assessing the desirability of faith-based tribunals, Fidler starts with an analysis of the procedures and laws involved in faith-based arbitration entirely oblivious to the more significant social and economic factors that shape and cradle the system. Homar Arjomand, coordinator of the International Campaign Against Sharia Courts in Canada, has pointed out that, "The women who can speak up, who have family to support them, the ones with options, they are not my concern. I am talking about the ones who... are restricted, who can't even go to a coffee shop because it is considered a bad place... who are disciplined by their husbands the way their children are."

Premier McGuinty's apparent public decision not to implement Sharia family law is pictured by Fidler as an about-face. However, as with other religious minorities, members of the Islamic community have had access to faith-based arbitration at least since the promulgation of the Arbitration Act in 1991 and, more informally, for decades earlier. However, it was not the recognition of the right to voluntarily participate in faith-based arbitration that was being legislated in McGuinty's retracted version of the amendments to the Arbitration Act. These amendments, based on recommendations made in a report issued by a former Cabinet Minister of the NDP government of Bob Rae, Marion Boyd,

advanced the extension of state coercion and public authority to the decisions made by all faith-based arbitrators. The subsequent revised legislation announced on November 15, 2005 and promulgated months thereafter, attempted to deflect public attention from this point by making the decisions of faith-based arbitrators subject to Canadian law. Fidler, oddly for a socialist, accepts this ruse used to justify the linking of faith-based arbitration decisions with the state enforcement mechanisms thereby marking a dramatic erosion of the fundamental secular principle that the church and state should be separate.

Of course, there is an explanation for Fidler's approach to this issue. It arises from his failure to understand the differentiation and complexities within the Islamic communities which contain dozens of different interpretations of Koranic teaching as practiced in different countries across the world. Sharia Law is a rubric which encompasses a wide variety of interpretations from humanitarian to archaic. However, Fidler's picture of the Islamic community is one of an undifferentiated whole, a community without contradictions, a community in which there is no conflict between rich and poor, between religious and non-religious and even anti-religious, between men and women, between gay and straight and between patriarchal and feminist. He minimizes and ignores the opposition to Bill 27 among many of the Islamic communities in Canada while at the same time making assertions without proof that opposition to Sharia Law has prevented unity between anti-war activists and members of the Islamic communities. He appears to be acting on the precept that alliances with forces in Islamic communities against the Iraqi war and against the U.S. intervention abroad presupposes support for the elites which dominate the religious life in these communities.

There is no reason why unity in the struggle against war cannot be built around simple demands such as immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq and Canadian troops from Afghanistan. Agreement on contentious religious issues cannot and should not be imposed as a further condition for united anti-war action thereby narrowing the range of potential supporters. There is no reason why advocates of state enforcement of Sharia Law cannot join antiwar demonstrations with persons who differ from them on this issue. The assumption by Fidler (and it is only an assumption) that opposition to the extension of state enforcement of religious decisions somehow prevents unity on other issues is fallacious. There is no need to obliterate all differences in order for participants to be able to join in a united front and act on those points which they agree on. Fidler's efforts to link elements on the left who oppose the amendments with reactionary pro-imperialist and Islamophobic forces is a slander against the activists that he disagrees with and an effort to prevent a discussion regarding these issues from being carried out in good faith. However, Fidler's strident opposition to his opponents falters as many women from Islamic communities both participate in the anti-war movement and oppose the extension of Sharia law.

The biggest contradiction in Fidler's reasoning is yet to come. In Fidler's analysis, McGuinty's initial legislation was rebuffed by an anti-Sharia Islamophobic campaign. However, Fidler now says that McGunity has changed his colours again with the introduction of Bill 27, which he says "actually reflects a relatively subtle and nuanced appreciation of the underlying issues" (surprise!) He points out that Bill 27 does not

foreclose decisions based on Islamic or other religious principles by arbitrators in their interpretation of Canadian family law. How can this be? If anti-Islamic forces caused the Ontario government to abandon the Boyd proposals, how can the proposals now be resurrected in the latest version of the amendments to the Arbitration Act? Could it be that McGuinty was not ultimately influenced by what Fidler calls the irrationality and, it must be said, the Islamophobia of much of the "anti-Sharia" lobby? But even as Fidler describes Bill 27's reasonableness, he fails to explain the reasons for McGuinty's change of heart from accommodating Islamophobic pressures to suddenly standing up to them. Fidler's ultimate qualified endorsement of Bill 27 shows that it is a good example of the Liberal government saying one thing and doing exactly the opposite. It is true that the introduction of the Bill on November 15, 2005 was initially hailed by many activists and feminists as a victory against the government's previous decision to enforce faith-based arbitration of family law issues. But, although the Bill purports to give supremacy to Canadian law over Sharia law, it in fact provides state compulsion (for) religious arbitration of decisions while pretending to do exactly the opposite.

Although the Bill on its face limits government enforcement of family arbitration decisions by religious arbitrators only to arbitration conducted in accordance with Canadian law, this provision is vague in its scope and application. Will Canadian law also apply to the administrative processes of privatized religious family law arbitration? Who will enforce this provision? What standardized training will the arbitrators have, if any? The "Canadianization" of these tribunals will be impossible to enforce or oversee. Hearings will continue to be held behind closed doors and inaccessible to members of the community involved, let alone the public. Evil lurks in dark corners. Without public superintendence, there can be no effective or meaningful scrutiny of the activities of Rabbis, Imams, Priests and Ministers. Family law hearings in the existing civil courts are "courts of record" by law and held in accessible courthouses staffed by public employees working for an accountable Ministry of the Attorney General. Religious family law arbitrations are held in unpublicized locations without properly trained staff or ascertainable scheduling and lack independent clerical or administrative staff. The absence of transparency and public accessibility is a formula for disaster that will inevitably erode fairness and accountability in any quasi-judicial process. Shielded from oversight in the anterooms of synagogues, churches and mosques, there will be no way of ensuring the evenhanded and informed application of Canadian judicial standards to such outsourced family courts.

Bill 27 contains no requirement that a transcribed record be kept of the proceedings which will adjudicate on complex issues of custody, access, inheritance, division of property and similar issues. This will undermine the ability of effective appeals, one of the main selling points for passage of Bill 27. It is difficult enough to exercise a right to appeal on a record of proceedings without complicating the matter with "he said, she said" recollections.

Even Bill 27's basket mandate that the arbitration be conducted in accordance with the law of Ontario or "another Canadian jurisdiction", opens another Pandora's box. Who will determine which law from 12 different jurisdictions will apply since family law is within

provincial jurisdiction? Where will we find arbitrators or, for that matter, appeal judges with the knowledge of family law from so many different jurisdictions? In fact, why should the Ontario government mandate private arbitrators to apply the laws of the Yukon Territories or Prince Edward Island in Ontario if they so wish (a right not available in the public civil courts!) and then have their decisions subject to appeal to Ontario judges who will also have to apply the law of one of 12 jurisdictions that they almost certainly will have no familiarity with? In fact, why would any thoughtful government rush through a Bill that is open to such a mish-mash of confusion and that is so patently a recipe for disaster?

The broadening of the right of appeal to include substantive grounds instead of jurisdictional grounds alone as previously recommended has been hailed as a significant change in the legislation. However, such enthusiasm ignores the pressures on women to "keep it all in the family". Women who will choose to appeal the rulings of Rabbis in the cloistered Orthodox Jewish community will almost certainly be shamed into submission and ostracized as traitors for airing their "dirty laundry" in the public. If they wish to remain part of their community, they will not readily rush to seek public remedies against perceived private wrongs that will leave them outside of the boundaries of the value system they have selected to abide by.

Appeals are ineffective in any event. Like other complaint-driven processes, appeals are costly, time-consuming, lengthy and unpredictable in their outcome. Until an unjust decision is overturned, appellants will suffer the consequences of a miscarriage of justice.

No standards for the qualification of advocates who will appear before the faith-based tribunals are promulgated and no accountability to ensure their competence is set out in Bill 27.

The granting of rights means nothing without insuring that they can be exercised. This is clear, for example, in Canada's penitentiary system. Royal Commissions have documented that in the absence of public scrutiny, rules promulgated by governments which guarantee prisoners' rights wilt under indifference and lack of enforcement. For women in the Muslim, Mormon and Orthodox Jewish communities, their ability to exercise their rights are similarly circumscribed. Silence and passive acceptance has become the common standard for these women who are treated as pariahs for challenging the wisdom of the religious leaders of their community. The very silence Fidler celebrates as proof that faith-based arbitration works is actually damning evidence of the voicelessness of many of the vulnerable participants in the process. Even in the absence of walls and bars, these poor and powerless victims remain confined by cultural restrictions they impose on their own choices in order to remain in their community.

It is now apparent that Attorney General Bryant has brought through the back door what he was unable to bring through the front door in the face of a revolt of female MPPs in the Ontario Liberal Caucus as well as an outcry from feminists, primarily led by women

within Islamic communities, who did not wish to be subjected to state compulsion to privatized religious arbitration decisions. The new Bill is no more then old wine in new bottles.

The slew of proposed amendments to the old Arbitration Act provides a telling clue to the vast array of safeguards that will be necessary to make privatized religious arbitration of family law issues work. The Bill still does not set standards of training for religious arbitrators who now will be required to interpret complex Canadian legal jurisprudence in a hotly litigated area of the law. While it requires independent legal advice to be given to parties signing an arbitration agreement, the expense and inconvenience of obtaining such advice usually means that such rights are waived or that the advice is not truly independent. Rights of appeal to the public courts may itself be illusory as well for the additional reason that women in these communities are economically disadvantaged and not likely able to be able to bear the overwhelming costs of having a lawyer represent them in civil court appeals.

For those who uncritically believed that the Ontario government would repeal its state endorsement of religious arbitration, the reality has turned out to be quite different. It is an open secret that the Liberal Party draws much of its electoral support from ethnic and minority communities and has organic links with many of the religious elites in these communities. Influenced by the lobbying of a burgeoning arbitration and mediation industry which has doubled and tripled in size over the last 20 years consuming many members of the legal profession, there are vested interests which wish to maintain the Arbitration Act essentially in the same form that it has now existed for 14 years and to extend public subsidies and state authority to the enforcement of their decisions. Caught between a revolt in its own caucus and the political pressures of these forces on the Liberal Party, the Ontario government has done what politicians frequently do in these situations: promised one thing and delivered, albeit in a somewhat transparent disguise, a totally different package.

The fact that the Ontario government has not capitulated after all to the "Islamophobic" lobby against Sharia Law leaves Fidler in a state of unacknowledged befuddlement. If the anti-Sharia forces are so powerful and have had their way, how is it that the Government has resisted them after all?

This is the essential dilemma that Fidler faces. On one hand, he slams virtually the entire left for joining a cabal of Islamophobes in a campaign against Islam and sabotaging the unity between Islamic communities and anti-war activists. On the other hand, he has to accept and recognize that Michael Bryant has basically brought into the sphere of state support Sharia and other faith-based tribunals while pretending not to do so. The recognition of this fact is not entirely admitted by Fidler who qualifies his opinion with references to the fact that McGuinty was consulting broadly with anti-Sharia activists (the appearance of consultation is always a political savvy thing to do) and by suggesting that the details of the legislation to be worked out in regulations not yet promulgated may impact on the way the Act is applied in practical terms. However, Fidler's inability to explain how the Liberal government of Ontario ended up sanctifying Sharia Law with

public authority while being pressured by deceived leftists and reactionaries to do precisely the opposite blows apart the central thesis of his argument. In fact, it is Fidler, not the left, who is the one with questionable bedfellows including advocates of privatizing public judicial services and proponents of patriarchal and anti-women ministers, priests, rabbis and imams.

The historical tradition of socialists is to promote a unified accessible public system for the adjudication of issues that involve public and social rights so often skewed by gender discrimination, social inequality and arcane traditions. Faith-based arbitration encourages the marginalization and segregation of Muslims from the rest of society as it is also does with other minorities who practice faith-based religions (Chassidic Jews, the Mormon community, etc.). Yes, we do want to reach out to those who are oppressed and discriminated against. Yes, we want to break down the walls that separate us. But will we do so by building new ones? Yes, we agree with Fidler with the need for unity. But with whom? And for what?

(end)

Friends:

Harry's struggle continues, to reform the legal system and regain his right to exercise his profession as lawyer, which he continues to practise as legal agent in an exemplary manner.

Be sure to pick up today's Globe to check out this story, by the reporter that covered the Krazy Glue case 21 years ago, but who doesn't yet have his facts straight about that period.

==JD

To: FG
From: John Darling <fwdsail@idirect.com>
Subject: Comrade Kopyto battling "Krazy Glue" judge -- Globe & Mail Oct. 6/06
Cc: Friends

Comrades & Friends:

"Judge to face misconduct probe" (Toronto Globe & Mail, Oct. 6/06) reports Harry Kopyto's action against Judge Zuker, who back in 1985 convicted Harry of contempt of court after the judge refused to convict the RCMP, which he admitted had broken the law, of harassment crimes his client Ross Dowson and the movement he led. (Harry had denounced this action by noting that the courts and RCMP "are stuck together with Krazy Glue.")

Judge Zuker is now being investigated by the Ontario Judicial Council for misconduct after Harry accused him of deleting remarks on Harry's courtroom "overly adversarial" style, from a court transcript being used for an appeal by Harry's client.

The article notes that since 1985 Zuker has become a well-known specialist in family law while Harry has suffered disbarment at the hands of the Ontario Law Society, who found him guilty of misconduct by a split rare decision, ignoring Harry's demands for a trial where he could defend himself against charges of legal aid fraud. Harry's disbarment was never based on any court decision, only by an arbitrary and political ukase of the Law Society. The article misrepresents the facts when it insinuates that Harry was disbarred for fraud, while in fact no court decision was ever rendered. Talk about a "frameup," a political railroading!

The article quotes Harry: "This judge thinks he can get away with anything he wants to... He did it with Dowson in the 1980s, and he is doing it to my client now... In a sense, he was the author of my misfortune then. Now, I may be the author of his misfortune."

Well-wishers can reach Harry at 416-907-5128 and he can be heard weekly on a highly

Judge to face misconduct probe

Hearing ordered over complaint key remark deleted from transcript

BY KIRK MAKIN, JUSTICE REPORTER

An Ontario judge will be probed for misconduct by his peers in the wake of allegations that he deleted a key remark from a court transcript.

The Ontario Judicial Council ordered a rare misconduct hearing after it completed a preliminary investigation into a complaint lodged against Mr. Justice Marvin Zuker of the Ontario Court of Justice.

The complainant is disbarred Toronto lawyer Harry Kopyto, who was prevented from acting as a legal agent in Judge Zuker's court last year on the basis that Mr. Kopyto has a reputation for being overly adversarial.

After being excluded from the July 29, 2005, proceeding, Mr. Kopyto ordered a transcript so that his client, Robin Mayer, could appeal the ruling.

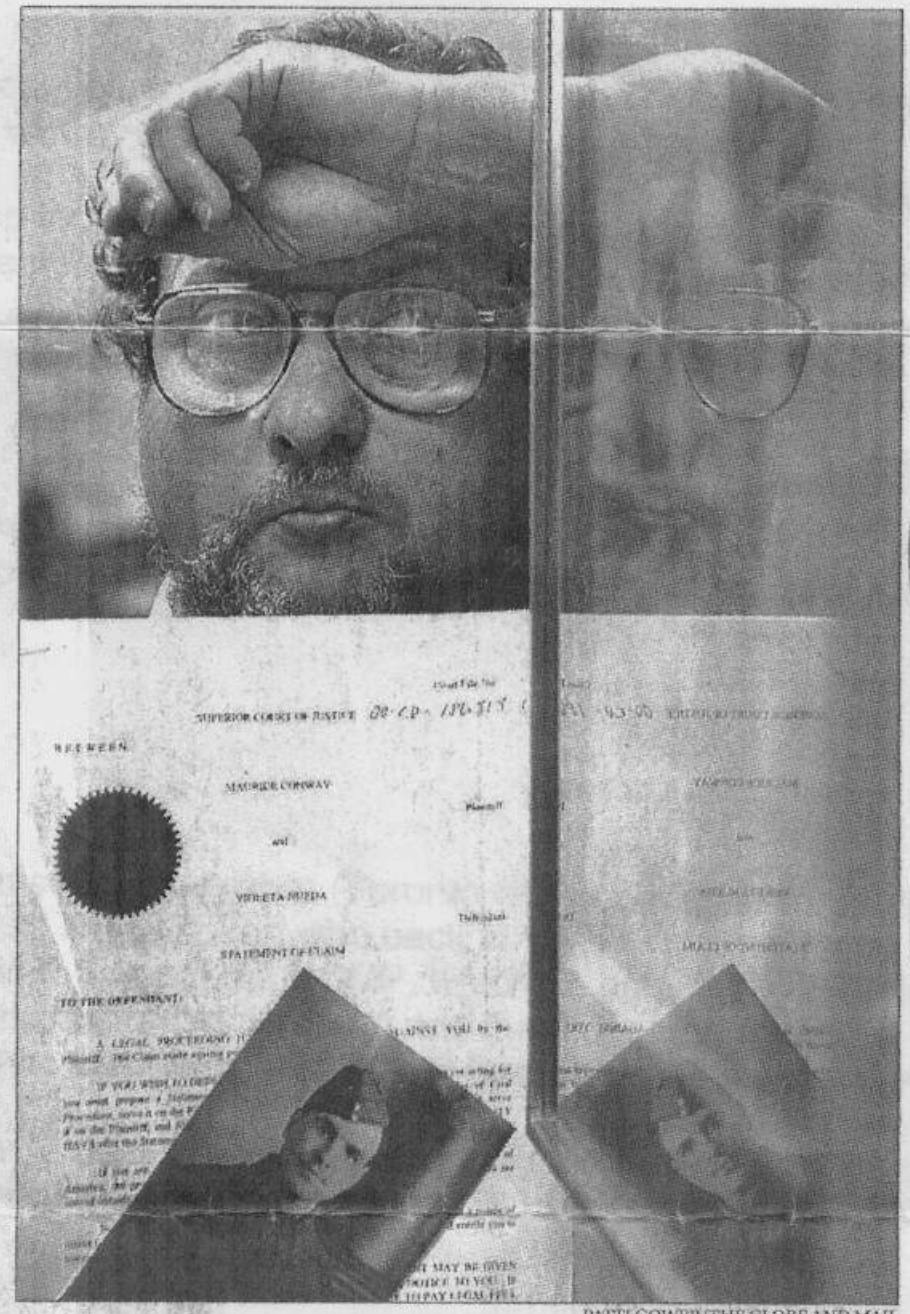
He alleges that the crucial phrases underlying Judge Zuker's ruling were mysteriously missing.

"I had to pinch myself," Mr. Kopyto said in an interview. "Did I dream it? That was my grounds of appeal. How can she [Ms. Mayer] proceed with an appeal if the grounds aren't there?"

Mr. Kopyto said the case has important repercussions for the justice system. "He [Judge Zuker] is highly regarded among the judiciary," he said. "If he feels comfortable editing a transcript for content, what are the other judges getting away with? If Judge Zuker is doing it, then it's widespread."

In one of several highly unusual twists, the case brings together two old adversaries whose initial courtroom clash in 1985 resulted in a milestone judgment on freedom of speech.

In that case, Mr. Kopyto, who was already well known within the legal community for his left-leaning causes and his combative style, was suing the RCMP for alleged political dirty tricks on behalf of a client, Ross Dowson.



PATTI GOWER/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Harry Kopyto alleges that editing of a legal transcript deprived his client of a way to appeal a ruling in a family-law case.

After accusing Judge Zuker in The Globe and Mail of perpetrating a mockery of justice and favouring police "as if they're stuck together with Krazy Glue," Mr. Kopyto was charged and convicted of contempt of court. However, the Ontario Court of Appeal later acquitted him, striking down the contempt provision he had been charged under, known as "scandalizing the court."

In subsequent years, Judge Zuker, a highly regarded specialist in family law, rose from being a small claims court judge to a mainstay of the family court branch. Mr. Kopyto, meanwhile, was disbarred for cheating legal aid.

Mr. Kopyto's current complaint arises from a case in which Ms. Mayer was battling the Jewish Family and Child Service, which was investigating her treatment of her children.

According to the transcript, Judge Zuker questioned Mr. Kopyto's understanding of family law and stated several times that the welfare of Ms. Mayer's children was at stake.

"The best interests of the children come first; not who's right or who's wrong," Judge Zuker told Ms. Mayer. "At the end of the day, I may make an order that you don't agree with, and then you'll say: 'Well, I should have had a lawyer represent me.' What is more important in our society than the future of our children?"

Mr. Kopyto's complaint to the judicial council alleges that by removing the reference to his overzealous tactics from the court transcript, Judge Zuker effectively deprived Ms. Mayer of her ability to appeal the ruling.

"I believe that such conduct amounts to clearly improper conduct and, in the instant case, resulted in a miscarriage of justice to my client in the appeal process," he said.

Ms. Mayer states in a document prepared for the appeal that she was "dismayed and appalled" when she discovered that the transcript had been altered.

She said that "my life and family are being subjected to a judicial process before a judge whose apparent conduct has raised serious issues about the administration of justice."

Mr. Kopyto said yesterday it is absurd for a judge to accuse a lawyer of being too adversarial. "That's a bunch of crap: Everything in court is adversarial," he said.

"Lawyers are terrified to lay complaints against a judge," Mr. Kopyto added. "The perceived wisdom is that you're cutting your throat, so you just don't do it. For every complaint that is laid, there are probably a few dozen that should have been."

Mr. Kopyto said that he had to fight hard in order to obtain a copy of the guidelines judges are given which set out the rules for editing transcripts; rules which specifically restrict changes to matters of accuracy and punctuation, and say that nothing of substance can be removed.

"This judge thinks he can get away with anything he wants to," Mr. Kopyto said. "He did it with Dowson in the 1980s, and he is doing it to my client now. . . . In a sense, he was the author of my misfortune then. Now, I may be the author of his misfortune."

Philip Epstein, the judge's lawyer, said he couldn't comment on the matter.

To: <Undisclosed-Recipient:;>
Subject: Caracas discusses Leon Trotsky

----- Original Message ----- From: "Walter Lippmann" <walterlx@earthlink.net>

Amazing discussion, written and, even more, with a twenty-minute YouTube video of Celia Hart, Esteban Volkov (Trotsky's grandson) and Peruvian revolutionary writer and activist Ricardo Napuri is now posted on the In Defense of Marxiam site. The sound and video quality is outstanding.

http://www.marxist.com/caracas-leon-trotsky-assassination200807.htm

I'd guess this is the only place in the world today where Trotsky and his ideas are being discussed before a national television audience. And, using the internet, an international audience.

Walter Lippmann Los Angeles, California

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Leon Trotsky-Revolutionary martyr

http://www.marxist.com/leon-trotsky-revolutionary-martyr200807.htm

video on Venezuela TV at end of article

http://www.marxist.com/caracas-leon-trotsky-assassination200807.htm

Caracas discusses Leon Trotsky on the anniversary of his assassination

By **In Defence of Marxism**
Monday, 20 August 2007

The ideas of Leon Trotsky have already been referred to on a number of occasions by president Chávez, who has said he is a follower of the permanent revolution, and commented favourably on the Transitional Programme.